

The Great Concerne
or
PREPARATION for DEATH
by.

EDWARD PEARSE
a servant of Iesus
Christ.
Obijt 1673. Aetate 40.



Printed for R. Robinson

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THE *4109*
Great Concern :
OR, A
Serious WARNING
To a Timely and Thorough
PREPARATION
FOR
DEATH:
WITH
HELPS and DIRECTIONS in
Order thereunto.

By **EDWARD PEARSE.**

*John IX. 4. I must work the Works of him
that sent me while it is Day : The Night
cometh when no Man can work.*

Recommended as proper to be Given
at **FUNERALS.**

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TO THE
READER.

READER,

IF thou art one who indeed livest in the Belief of a Future Life, an Eternity of Happiness or Misery, when Time and Days shall be no more, I am confident the ensuing Discourse will be Grateful and Welcome to thee: I make no Apology for its Plainness, nor am I at all Solicitous touching the Censures I may fall under for Publishing of it: If thou wilt Read it with an upright Heart, I question not but through a Blessing from above it may do thy Soul Good: Sure I am thou wilt find the Argument most Weighty, and the Concern thereof most Important: And woe be to that Soul which misseth the Design it tends to, and aims at. When Men come to Die, and to find themselves launching forth into the vast Ocean of Eternity; at least, when once they find themselves incircled in that Ocean, which (quickly they do when once Death makes its Approach.) then they see that their great Interest lay beyond this Poor, Vain, Perishing World, and the Things thereof; then they see that their Great Concern was to have look'd and liv'd beyond Time

To the Reader.

and Days, and have made Provision for an Eternal State ; but *Alas ! Alas !* Then 'tis too late : Then they cry out, *O Eternity ! Eternity ! O miserable Souls that we are !* How did Sin and the World blind and bewitch us, that we could not e'er now, when it is too late, see the Weight of an Eternal Interest ! *O Blind and Brutish Creatures,* that were taken with Carnal and Sensual Things, Things pleasing only to a Sensual Appetite, and forgot God, the chief Good, the Things of Heaven, and a Blessed Eternity, which would have made us happy for ever ! Now to prevent those doleful Lamentations, and such a dismal and remediless Shipwreck of Eternal Souls, as also to shew them the Path of Life, and to engage them to make sure of a Blessed Eternity, while Time and Days last, is the Design of the ensuing Discourse, and of the Dying Author, in it. And the Lord, the God of all Grace, prosper it in order thereunto. God has kept me for full half a Year by the Grave's Side, one while lifting me up, then casting me down, and now he seems to be speedily finishing my Days, to whom, through the Infinite Riches of Free Grace, I can with some Comfort and Boldness say, Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, Amen. And now farewell vain World, farewell Eating and Drinking ; and blessed be God, farewell Friends and Relations, farewell Sin and Sinning ; within a few Days I shall Sin no more, nor ever be in a Possibility of Sinning, but shall be like my Lord, and shall see him as he is. And lastly, farewell Reader.

E. P.

A

A Proposition for the more Profitable Improvement of Burials, by giving of Books.

THat great Stupidity that is on the Generality of Mankind concerning their Mortality, does manifest the Usefulness of Books of this Subject: For although Men know that by reason of the First Transgression it is appointed for all Men once to die; though the Principles of this Natural Life (by which it is upheld) are so weak that they cannot support it long; though there are many Internal Causes that, as secret Mines, may soon blow up Men, even of the Strongest Constitution; and many External Causes, as a Tyle from a House, or the Stumbling of a Horse, that may soon cast Men into the Grave; tho' there are continual Representations and Spectacles of Mortality, in which Men, as in a Glass, may behold their Natural Face; and though Men always carry about them the Symptoms of Mortality, and the Marks of Death, yet they generally live as if they should never die. In small Villages where Instances of Mortality are very rare, there the Inward Thoughts of their Hearts seem to be, that they and their Houses shall continue for ever, and their Dwelling-places to all Generations. In Populous Towns and Cities, there the Commonness takes away the Sense of Mortality.

And how sad is it to behold the Unsuitable Carriage of the generality of Christians at Funerals! Those Opportunities are usually spent in Unprofitable Chat, in Mirth, in Eating and Drinking, and that sometimes to excess; and thus the House of Mourning is turned into the House of Mirth and Feasting.

To Cure this Evil Frame, we have thought Good to propound that which we find to be the Wish of the generality of Pious Persons,

A Proposition, &c.

viz. That Books of this Nature may be given at Burials, instead of Rings, Gloves, Bisket, Wine, &c. Reading and Meditation would be much more decent at such sad Solemnities than Eating and Drinking, and putting on of Ornaments. Books of this Subject would make People mind the present Instance of Mortality, and affect them with such Devout Meditations as these, Lord ! This Tragedy that is now acting on our deceased Friend must e'er long (God knows how soon) be acted on us all; our Breath is ready to perish; the Earth is gaping for us; yet a little while and we shall be carried down into the Chambers of Death. Lord ! Teach us so. to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto true Saving Wisdom. No doubt much Good may redound to the Souls of Men this Way; and God be thanked we can testify where it has been practised, People have been made more serious on such sad Occasions.

If therefore, Reader, thou art one of these that desirest to mind thine own Concern, and to stir up others to a timely and thorough Preparation for Death, we question not but thou wilt approve of, and recommend to others, this our Proposition: In which again we assure thee (however some Censorious Persons, that take Measures of us by their own Narrow Spirits, may judge) we do not so much aim at our own private Gain, as the publick of all Good Christians. 20 MA 59

If Christians are so Well minded as to embrace this Proposition, we think fit to insert the Names of some Books proper for this Purpose at the End of this Treatise,

T H E

THE
Great Concern :
Or, Preparation for
D E A T H :

PSALM xxxix. 13.

O spare me, that I may recover Strength
before I go hence, and be no more.

C H A P. I.

Which contains an Introduction, and an Explication of the Words of the Text, with the General Truth of them, and therein the Foundation of our intended Discourse.

TO walk with God here on Earth while we Live, and to be ready to live with God for ever in Heaven when we come to Die, is the great Work we have to do, the great Concern we have to mind, in our present Pilgrimage. To grow Great and High in the World, to Build

our Names and Families, to live a Life of Sensual Pleasures and Delights, spending our Days in Mirth, these are Low and Mean, Poor Things; Things infinitely beneath the Dignity of a Soul, and altogether unworthy of the least of its Care and Solitude: But to know God, to love God, to obey God, to delight in God, to contemplate the Glorious Excellencies and Perfections of God, to live upon God, and to live to God; upon him as our chief Good and Happiness, and to him as our last End; and withal to be found ready at last to live with him for ever, to enter upon the Beneficial Vision, and to pass into that Life of Love and Holiness which the Saints and Angels live above, being made perfect in the Vision and Fruition of the God of Glory, this is truly Noble, this is worthy of the Care and Solitude of Souls. To promote these Things, and more especially the latter, is my Design in fixing my Meditations upon this Scripture, which I am the rather induced to do, because I am apprehensive that the Time of my going hence, when I shall be seen no more, is drawing very nigh. The Words are a Holy and Prophetical Wish and Desire breathed out into the Bosom of God by the Man after his own Heart: And that when under sore and heavy Afflictions, under grievous Sickneses, say some; under great Straits and Distresses, by Reason of *Abraham's* Rebellion and Conspiracy against him, say others. In this Wish or Desire of his you may note Three Things.

Preparation for Death.

3

1. What that is which he wisheth for, or desires of God; and that is, *Sparing Mercy, O spare me.*

2. The End of this Wish or Desire of his; and that is the Recovery of Strength, *O spare me, that I may recover Strength.*

3. The Ground or Motives which induced him to make his Desire for this End, and that was the near Approach of his Death, in these Words, *Before I go hence, and be no more seen, I will briefly Paraphrase the Words for the Opening of them, and then give you the Sum of them, as also my Intendment for them, in one general Position.*

*O spare me; that is, * cease to smite and afflict me, give me a little Relaxation, a Breathing-time, so one expounds it: Deal gently and mildly with me, says another, withdraw thy Hand a little from Scourging me, and mitigate the Violence of my Afflictions, says another: That I may recover my Strength; † that I may recruite my self a little, saith one; that I may have a Breathing-time before my Death, and being well composed, may lay down my Spirit, and commit it into thy Hand, says another; that I may grow Strong in Grace and Holiness, says another; that I may finish my Course, and Fight a Good Fight, obtaining*

** Cessa percutere & affligere, &c. Mol. Leniter mecum age. Mar. Abstine aliquantulum manus tuas à flagellando. Menoch.*

† Ut respirem ante mortem, & tranquillus animam meam in manum tuam deponam. Mol.

raining the Victory through a Happy Death, say others. The Sum is, That I may set Things right in my Soul, and get into a more ready Posture for my Death and Dissolution, which seems to be near at Hand. *Before I go hence and be no more*; that is, * before I die, never more to return into this Life; before I quit this World, and bid adieu to this Mortal Life, to be no more in the Land of the Living, to be no more in this World, to do any Thing for God, or my Soul: For as one observes, *David* doth not here suppose Death to be the Utter End or Annihilation of Man, the putting of a Man out of Being; but his Meaning is, if God did still go on to afflict him as he had done, he must suddenly die, suddenly go off the Stage of this World, and go down to the Bars of Death, to the Gates of the Grave; where, as to any Thing that is to be done for God, or a Man's Soul, it is as if he were out of Being; and where he will be kept for ever from returning any more to this Life, or any Opportunity of ever doing any Thing for another World. It is a Phrase like to, and of the same Importance with that, *Job* 16. 22. where *Job* speaks of himself, *When a few Years are come, then shall I go the Way whence I shall not return*: Not return, that is, not any more to this Life; not to return to do any Thing for God, or my Soul. The Sum of the Whole seems to be thus much; the Good Man's Afflictions were so pressing and heavy upon

* *Antequam morier in hanc vitam nunquam reversurus* Jun.

upon him that they did even bow him down to the Grave; and he really looked upon himself as a Dying Man, as one going down to the Dust of the Earth, where he knew full well nothing was to be done for another Life, and from whence there was no return to this Life to be expected any more; and therefore he begs a Breathing-time, a little Space wherein to recover himself out of all present Distempers and Discomposures of Heart, and to set all Things right in the Matter of his Soul; thereby fitting and preparing himself the better for his Departure out of this World: He begs a Time of Respite, wherein to prepare himself, and make ready for a Dying Hour. This is the Sum of what he drives at, and pleads with God for, according to the Observation, and wherein the Sum of my Intendment shall be this.

Doct. That 'tis a very Desireable Thing, and a Business of the Highest Moment and Importance to the Children of Men, to have all Things set right, well-ordered, and composed, in the Matters of their Souls before they leave this World; to get all the Spiritual Concern of their Souls into the best Posture they can before a Dying Hour comes.

David, an Holy Man, a Man in Covenant with God, yea, a Man after God's own Heart, doth yet (you see) pray for Sparing Mercy,
for

for a Breathing-time, a Time of Respite here in this World before he goeth off the Stage : And why so ? *That he might recover Strength*, that he might set Things right in the Matters of his Soul, that he might make himself more ready, and get his Spiritual Concern into a better Posture for a Dying Hour ; And this he look'd at, and made out after, as that which was most Desirable, and of the highest Importance to him, as indeed 'tis to all. You have a Scripture not unlike to this, Job 10. 20, 21. *Are not my Days few ? Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take Comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even to the Land of Darknes, and of the Shadow of Death :* That I may take Comfort a little, that I may recover a little, that I may have a Breathing-time that I may recover my self, and gather up my Spirits : So I find the Phrase expounded. He seems to desire a Breathing-time, the better to compose himself, and the Matters of his Soul, for a Dying Hour. And indeed 'tis the Concern of us all to set all Things right in our Souls, and to get into the readiest Posture that possibly we can, against a Dying Hour comes. I shall first briefly evince this Truth, and then make some Practical Improvement of it.

C H A P. II.

Wherein is shewn the exceeding great Weight of Dying Work, and extream Difficulty of a Dying Hour, as the first Evidence of our Assertion.

Dying Work, my beloved, is great Work, and a Dying Hour is a difficult Hour : and therefore we had need have all Things well ordered, and ready, in the Matters of our Souls, against that Time, that Work, that Hour, comes. I will lay the Weight of Dying Work, and the Difficulty of a Dying Hour, before you in Four Propositions.

First Proposition is this, That Death in itself, and in its own Nature, (if we look no farther,) is a very terrible Thing ; and we had need have all Things set right in our Souls, all things in order, when we come to encounter with it. The Philosopher, who look'd not beyond the Natural Notion of Death; called it, Πάντων τῶν φθιζόντων φοβερότατον. *Artist.* the most terrible of all terrible Things. And in *Job* 18. 14. The Holy Ghost himself calls it *the King of Terrors* : *His Confidence* (speaking of a wicked Man) *shall bring him to the King of Terrors*, i. e. to Death, which is most formidable : Indeed, 'tis therefore called the King of Terrors, because it is the greatest and strongest Terror. And Death must needs be terrible in itself.

1. Because it deprives us of all our sweet Comforts and Enjoyments here in this World, and puts an Eternal Period to our Fruition of them. Here we enjoy much Good, many Streams, which run pleasantly on each Hand of us, (it may be,) but when Death comes that deprives us of all. *Naked came I into the World, and Naked shall I return, Job 1. 21.* So the Apostle, *We brought nothing into this World, and it is certain we shall carry nothing out,* speaking as to our outward Comforts here, 1 Tim. 6. 7. The Psalmist to the same Effect, Psal. 49. 17. speaks of a Rich Man, *He shall carry nothing away: His Glory (saith he) shall not descend after him.* Death, as one observes, is the greatest Leveller in the World, it levels Scepters and Plowshares, it makes the Prince as poor as the Peasant.

2. Because it dissolves the Union between the Soul and the Body: Death is indeed the rending of Body and Soul (those Old and Loving Companions) asunder. Now all Disunions (as a worthy Divine observes) are uncomfortable, and some Disunions are terrible: And as some Disunions are terrible, so those are of all others most terrible that do rend them from us which are most dear to us. Now what Union so near as that between the Soul and Body? And therefore what Disunion so terrible as the Dissolution of this Union? The dissolving the Union between a Man and his Wife is terrible, because they are nearly united each to other; but the Dissolving the Union between Soul and Body is more

more terrible, because the Union is more near and close. A Man and his Wife *are one Flesh*; but the Soul and Body make but one Person; now Death dissolves this Union. While we live, the Soul dwells in the Body, informs the Body, acts in and by the Body, it hath a great Influence upon, and is greatly influenced by the Body: But when Death comes, then the Soul and Body part till the Resurrection; *one returning to Dust whence it came, the other, to God who gave it, Eccles. 10. 7.*

3. It is the destroying and demolishing of the Body of Man, that Famous and Curious Fabrick, and a bringing it into Dust and Putrefaction, *Psal. 90. 3.* It turns a living Body into a Dead Carcase, a Lifeless Lump of Clay, and causeth it to become Meat for Worms to feed on, *Jeb. 18. 26.* The Body of Man is a very Curious Piece of Workmanship, such as wherein the Infinite Power and Wisdom of God is much seen and manifested, *Psal. 139. 14. 15.* But when Death comes, it marrs and demolishes all, stains all its Beauty, and draws a Veil upon all its Glory. Sickness often makes a Man's Beauty to *consume away like a Moth*, as you have it, *Psal. 39. 11.* But Death utterly Defaces it, and draws a Veil upon it, that turns his Beauty into Blackness and Deformity. One of the Ancients standing by *Cesar's Tomb* wept, saying, Where is now the Beauty of *Cesar*? What now is become of all his Magnificence? In a Word, as Life is the Sweetest of all outward Mercies, so Death is the Sharpest of all outward Afflictions:
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The pains of it are Pains to a Proverb, the Sorrows of it are Sorrows to a Proverb : *The Sorrows of Death compass me about*, Psal. 116. 3. Now if Death be thus terrible in itself, then judge ye whether we had not need to have all Things ready and in order when it comes.

Second Proposition is, That in a Dying Hour the Devil is most fierce and terrible in his Assaults and Temptations upon the Soul. The Devil is in the Scripture called a *Roaring Lion*; and is usually most so against the Poor People of God when they come to die; *Then he hath Wrath, because he knows his Time is short*, to allude to that, Rev. 12. 12. When a Man or Woman comes to die, the Devil knows he has but a short Time to tempt, to vex, to terrifie, that Soul, and therefore then usually he exercises great Wrath; then he stirs up all his Wrath, all his Malice, all his Cruelty, against him; he sees this is the last cast he is like to have for it, the last Onset he is ever like to make upon the Soul's Faith and Comfort, and that now the Battle is to be won or lost for ever; therefore now he roars and rages terribly indeed, now he discharges all his Murthering-pieces, against the Soul, to make Batteries, if possible, upon the Soul's Fort of Salvation, and to shake its Foundation of Life and Happiness. The Devil is the Enemy of Souls, *Mal. 13. 25.* and his Enmity works especially One of these Two Ways; either, First, To keep them from Life and Happiness; and here he acts rather like an Angel of Light than a Roaring Lion: He
works

works rather in a Way of Flattery, than in a Way of Terror. Hence we Read of his *Wiles, Methods, Devices*, and the like; his cunning, fallacious Workings, thereby to destroy Souls. Or, Secondly, To trouble and torment Souls in their Way to Life and Happiness: And here he is indeed like a roaring Lion, and never more than when we come to die. There are, among others, Two Seasons wherein the Devil is most fierce and terrible in his Assaults upon the Soul. The First is, When a Man is going from Sin to Grace; when he is fully resolved to close with Christ, to shake off the Yoke of Sin, and to take upon him the Yoke of *Jesus*. The Second is, When a Man is going from Grace to Glory; when he is going off the Stage of Time to Eternity; when a Man begins to live a Spiritual Life, and when a Man comes to die a Natural Death. I know, First, That as for his own Children he usually lets them alone when they come to die: He is afraid to have them disturbed; though sometimes he cannot forbear, but torments them before their Time. Secondly, God can, and sometimes does, Chain him up, so that he shall not be able to trouble and torment the Saints in their Passage out of this World: Yet still, I say, for the most part he does fiercely Assault them then; and doubtless there are but very few of the Children of God but do meet with very sore Assaults from Satan when they come to die; then he turns Accuser; then he charges the Soul with all its Sins; then he tells him, he is an Hypocrite

Hypocrite, that all his Profession hath been nothing but a Delusion; and the like. Now is Satan thus fierce and terrible in his Assaults upon the Soul in a Dying Hour? Surely then, we had need have all ready against that Hour comes:

3. The Third Proposition is this; that in a Dying Hour Conscience is most awakened; and so most quick and smart in its Threats and Charges against the Soul, if all be not right within, and therefore we had need have all so in that Hour. There are Three Seasons in which Conscience is most awake in the Soul. First, When God begins to deal with the Soul in order to Life and Salvation, then God lets Conscience loose upon a Man. Hence we Read of them, that they *were pricked at their Heart*, in the Sense of Sin: the Word is, they were pricked through and through, *Acts 2. 37.* And saith Paul, *When Sin revived, I died*, Rom. 7. 9. That is, in the sight of my Sin, which was wrought in me by the Law of God, I was made to see my self lost and miserable, and awakened out of my Security. Secondly, When the Soul is under some smart and notable Afflictions from the Hand of God: This is evident in that Instance of *Joseph's* Brethren, whose Consciences were awakened when they were in Distress, and charged them with the Guilt of their Sin in selling their Brother, *Gen. 42. 21.* Thirdly, When a Man comes to die, when the Visions of Death and the Grave are before him. Oh! You little think how strict Conscience will be

be in its Search, how sharp in its Charge, and how severe in its Censure, in a Dying Hour: Then if there be but the least Frown in God's Face towards the Soul, the least Flaw in his Peace, the least Blot or Blur in his Evidences for Heaven; if there be but the least Stain upon the Spirit, the least Sin unpardoned, unrepented of, it is a Thousand to one but Conscience will take notice of it, and charge the Soul with it. O Sirs, you will find a great deal of Difference between Conscience upon a Bed of Ease, and Conscience upon a Sick-bed; between Conscience in an Hour of Health and Worldly Prosperity, and Conscience in a Dying Hour: In the one great Things bear but little Weight, but in the other little Things usually bear great Weight in Conscience: Then the Language of Conscience to the Soul is, These and these Things hast thou done; thus and thus Things stand with thee; at best Grace is thus and thus weak, Corruption thus and thus strong, Temptations thus and thus prevalent, the Heart thus and thus out of frame, the Spirit thus and thus alienated from God, and the like: Hence 'tis that at Death there are such Confessions as you have sometimes from Men and Women, that now they will send for some Godly Minister or Christian to pray with them, and for them, though perhaps they could not endure Prayer all their Lifetime before. Now if in a Dying Hour Conscience be thus quick and smart in its Threats and Charges against the Soul, then surely
we

we had Need, 'tis plainly our Concern to have all ready and in order against that Hour comes.

The Fourth Proposition is this, That in a Dying Hour we shall have to do with God, in a very stupendious amazing Way, in such a Way as may well startle and affright us to think of it: We are said *to have to do with God* there, *Heb. 4. 13.* We have here to do with God in Duties, in Ordinances, in Mercies, in Afflictions: Indeed we had as good never have to do with these, unless we have to do with God in these: But though we have to do with God here while we live, yet know we shall have to do with God in another guess Way when we come to Die; in such a Way as may well overwhelm us to think of it. I shall give it you in Three Steps: Then we have to do with God immediately; with God immediately as our Judge, with God immediately as our Judge for Eternity: And O how loud do these Things call upon us to get all in order in the Matters of our Souls against a Dying Hour comes!

1. When a Man comes to die he has to do with God immediately; and that is an astonishing Thing. In *Death* the Body crumbles to Dust, *but the Soul returneth to God who gave it*: So the Holy Ghost tells us, *Eccles. 12. 7.* The Body, which came from the Dust, crumbles to Dust again; but the Soul, that goeth to God's immediate Presence, to deal and to treat with him as it were Face to Face; the Soul is always with God, and cannot possibly

ably be out of his Presence, *Psal. 137.* And yet here the Holy Ghost tells us when we die the Soul returns to God; intimating that when the Soul goes into the immediate Presence of God, and has more immediately to do with him, than here he was ever wont to have; then he beholds his Naked Majesty and Glory. Now what an Astonishing Thing is this? You will find (if you observe) that the Saints of God, yea, the Holiest of them, when they have dealt with God in a more immediate Way than ordinary, they have been overwhelmed by it: Take for an Instance *Daniel*, who upon receiving Visions from God, tells us, *There remained no Strength in him, That his Comeliness was turned into Corruption, Dan. 10. 8.* I might Instance also in *John*, who upon a View of, and Converse with Christ, that was a little more immediate than ordinary, *Fell down at his Feet as dead, Rev. 1. 17.* Also that of *Jacob*, *I have seen the Lord Face to Face, and yet my Life is preserved,* (says he;) intimating it was a Wonder that he could so immediately see God and live, *Gen. 32. 10.* Now if we are to deal with God immediately when we come to die, we had need have all in order before a Dying Hour comes.

2. When a Man comes to die, he has to do with God immediately as his Judge; as one that is to try him for his Life, to pass Sentence upon his Soul, to determine his State in Righteousness, measuring out Life or Death, Happiness or Vengeance, to him in the other World,

World: And is not this an Astonishing and an Amazing Thing? Then (saith Solomon, speaking of Death) *shall the Dust return to the Earth as it was, and the Spirit return to God who gave it, Eccles. 12. 7.* At Death the Spirit returns to God; but it is to God as a Judge, to determine his future Condition for him. *We must all stand before the Judgment-seat of Christ, and every one must give an Account of himself to God:* So the Scripture tells us, *Rom. 10. 12.* And, *It is appointed for all Men once to die, and after that the Judgment, Heb. 9. 27.* When a Man comes to die, that which is immediately before him is the Judgment of God; the Strict, the Righteous, the Impartial Judgment of God; then away goes the Soul into the immediate Presence of God, as sitting upon the Throne of Judgment to pass a Sentence of Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation, upon him: And (believe it) we had need to have all Things set right and well-ordered in our Souls when we come thus to deal with him: We had need have all Things well-ordered and set right in the Members of our Souls when we come to deal with God, but as sitting upon a Throne of Grace, but much more when we come to deal with him as sitting upon a Throne of Judgment, to conclude and determine our future Condition what it shall be. Judgment is an Astonishing and Terrifying Thing; *the Hearing of it made Felix tremble, or (as the Word is) it turned him into Terror and Affrightment, Acts 24. 25.* And the Apostle calls it, *The Terror of the Lord, 2 Cor. 5. 11.* Now when a Man comes to

die, then he says, or may say, Now I am to deal with the Great God, the Judge of all; now I must appear before his Righteous Tribunal, and have the State of my Soul determined for Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation, in the other World. O how great a Thing is this!

3. When a Man comes to die he has to do with God immediately as his Judge for Eternity; and this speaks it yet more terrifying and astonishing: For though a Man is then to deal with God immediately, and that as his Judge too, yet if it were but for a Time, for some short Term of Years, it would not be altogether such a terrifying and amazing Thing: But alas! It is for Eternity, and therefore his Judgment is called *Eternal Judgment*, Heb. 6. 2. Hence *Austin*, speaking of Death, calls it *Ostium Aternitatis*, the Gate of Eternity, i. e. the Gate or Door that lets Men out into Eternity; an Eternity of Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation. The Sentence which God will then pass upon the Soul will be an Eternal Sentence; and the Soul must be eternally under the Execution of it, whether it be for Life or Death, Salvation or Damnation. When a Man comes to die, he then sees himself launching forth into the great Ocean of Eternity; he sees his Eternal All to be immediately at stake, and his Eternal State to be immediately determined by the Great and Holy God: Now he sees he must shoot the great Gulf, and take up his Abode in the Eternal Region; this fills him with Amazement: O now, says he, a Sentence must pass upon me

once for all ; now I must shoot the great Gulf, now I must launch forth into the great Ocean, where neither Bounds nor Bottom is to be found for ever : Now I must enter upon Eternal Joys, or Eternal Flames ; an Endless Life, either with God or Devils in Heaven or Hell : Now I shall find Infiniteness and Eternity combine to do their utmost to make me happy or miserable for ever : Now I must become the immediate Object either of infinite Wrath, or infinite Love, infinite Hatred, or infinite Delight, and that for ever. Now I must hear from God, either *Come thou Blessed*, or *Depart thou Cursed*, and that for ever. And O what an astonishing Thing is this ! O Eternity ! Eternity ! O vast Eternity ! O great Eternity ! O boundless Eternity ! One serious View of it is enough to amaze a poor Soul, looking upon it at a Distance : But how much more amazing must it needs be, when it shall be immediately before the Soul, and he sees he must enter upon it the next Hour ? O then it will be amazing indeed ! Astonishing indeed ! This one Thing Eternity, puts infinite Sweetness into Mercies, and infinite Bitterness into Sufferings : The Thoughts of this was that which did so much amaze that Good Man, who sitting in a deep Muse a long time, and being asked the Reason of it, was silent ; and being asked again and again, at length broke out into these Words, *For ever, for ever, for ever, for ever* ; and for near a Quarter of an Hour together spake nothing else : Thereby telling them that asked him, that it was the Thoughts

of this same *for ever* that so much amused him. And if you were more in the Thoughts of the Weight of Eternity you would see it were an astonishing Thing indeed: And this is that which makes Dying Work such a Weighty Work, and a Dying Hour such a Difficult Hour, I will close this Head, and with that this Demonstration, with a Saying I have read in one of the Ancients, *that is not to be accounted* (says he) *an Evil Death, which has had a Good Life preceding it; nor doth any Thing make Death terrible, but that which follows Death: Therefore they which must necessarily die, are not much to concern themselves what falls out to cause Death, but whither by Death they are constrained to go, whither Death carries them.* It is a great Saying, and indeed 'tis no great Matter when we Die, or how we Die, or what is the Occasion of our Death; but it is whither Death carries us, and where Death sets us down; whether in a blessed or wretched Eternity; whether with God or Devils; in Heaven or Hell? Well then, if Death be thus terrible in its own Nature, if in a Dying Hour the Devil be so fierce and terrible in his Assaults upon Souls; if Conscience be so awakened and smart in its Charges and Accusations; if then we must have to do with God immediately, and as our Judge, yea, as our Judge for Eternity, as one that will determine the Eternal Condition of our Souls, in unspeakable Happiness, or unspeakable Misery; then surely Dying Work is a great Work, and a Dying Hour is a difficult Hour: It then greatly concerns us to have all ready, and all in order

in the Matters of our Souls against the time thereof comes.

C H A P. III.

Which sheweth the Glory, Sweetness, and Blessedness, of the Attainment of having all Things set right in the Matters of our Souls before a Dying Hour comes, which will farther evince the Truth asserted.

AS Dying Work is weighty Work, and a Dying Hour is a difficult Hour ; so to have all things set right, as well ordered and composed in the Matters of our Souls, against such an Hour comes, is an High, a Sweet, and a Blessed Attainment ; an Attainment which carries infinite Sweetness and Desirableness in it : A Taste of which I shall give you in Two Things only. 1. Hereby we come to be Glorious Conquerors over Death and the Grave. 2. Hereby we come to have abundant Entrance ministred to us into Heaven and Glory. And, my Beloved, what more Sweet and Desirable than this ? Surely this speaks it to be a very Sweet and Blessed Attainment.

1. Hereby we come to be Glorious Conquerors over Death and the Grave. Death is an Enemy ; 'tis the last Enemy the Children of God have to grapple and conflict with ; *The last Enemy that is to be destroyed is Death,* 1 Cor. 15. 26. And being the last Enemy, in conquering this they conquer all ; conquering this they

they are Compleat and Eternal Conquerors. Now by having all Things set right in the Matters of our Souls, all Things ready and in order for a Dying Hour, we come to Conquer this last Enemy, yea to get a Glorious Conquest over it: Hereby *Death comes to be swallowed up in Victory*, as you have the Expression 1. Cor. 15. 54. Hereby we are more than Conquerors over it, Rom. 8. 37. Take the Conquest which this gives us over *Death* in these Three Things.

1. Hereby the Soul is carried above the Fear of *Death*. In *Hebrews 2. 15.* we read of some *who all their Life-time were subject to Bondage through fear of Death*: And if in their Life-time, much more when they come to a Dying Hour; then Conscience (as you have heard) is more awake: O the Fears, the Terrors, the Hell upon Earth, that the Sight of *Death's* Approach fills many a poor Soul withal! But now take a Soul that has all Things right and in order in his Spiritual Concerns, and he is carried above the Fear of this King of Terrors; and that when made as terrible as the Wit and Malice of Man can possibly make it, he can converse with his last Enemy, as one that hath lost his Sting and Power, and so without the least Fear or Dismayedness of Spirit; *None of these Things move me, says Paul, neither count I my Life dear unto my self, that I may finish my Course with Joy.* His Afflictions did not move him, did not terrifie him. But if *Death* should come, what then? Why that shall be welcome too, saith he, *Acts 20. 24.*

Who is afraid of a conquered Enemy, an Enemy which a Man seeth dead and slain in the Field? One that has all Things ready for a Dying Hour, he sees Death to be a conquered Enemy, an Enemy conquered by the Death of Christ, and so is carried above the Fear of it.

2. Hereby the Soul is enabled in a Holy Manner to Triumph over Death, and even to Scorn and Contemn it; which is an higher Conquest still. A Man that has all Things set right, and well ordered, in the Matters of his Soul, he is not only carried above the Fear of Death, but he rides in Triumph over it, as one that divideth the Spoil: He can then with Boldness and Comfort challenge this last Enemy of his, and even dare it to do its worst to him: *O Death where is thy Sting? O Grave, where is thy Victory?* Saith the Apostle; *The Sting of Death is Sin, the Strength of Sin is the Law; But thanks be to God who giveth us the Victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ.* 1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57. As if he should say, Death, you talk of a Sting, but where is it? Grave, you would threaten us with Victory and Overthrow, but do your worst, conquer us if you can. As a Man that has disarmed his Enemy, thrown him upon his Back, and says to him, O Sir, where is your Sword, Where is your Pistol? Where is the Execution you threatened? Do your worst.

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be able Solemnly to chuse and desire Death; yea, very much to exult and rejoice in Death, as that which of an Enemy is become a Friend, and an Inlet
into

into all Happiness into him. So 2 Cor. 5. 5, 6, 7, 8. Now he that hath wrought us for the self-same Thing is God, who hath also given unto us the Earnest of his Spirit: Therefore we are always confident, knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord. So Phil. 1. 22, 23. But if I live in the Flesh, this is the Fruit of my Labour; yet what I shall chuse, I wot not; for I am in a Strait betwixt Two, having a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.

Mark, he desires Death, he chuses Death, as that which is a Friend to him, and an Inlet into his Happiness. Such an one can say, as I have read a German Divine did, when dying, I am ready, says he, and desire to be gone out of this Life, in which all things are not only full of Miseries and Calamities, but, which is to be lamented, all Things are full fraught with Sins: I say, I desire to pass into that Life in which there is no Sin, no Misery. Yea more, such an one can exult and rejoice in Death, Luke 2. 29, 30. Lord, now lettest thou thy Servant depart in Peace, according to thy Word, for mine Eyes have seen thy Salvation. They are Words of Joy and Exultation in the Sight of Death's Approach. The Child of some tender and indulgent Father being Abroad at Sojourn, and seeing a Messenger come from his Father to fetch him Home, how does he exult and rejoice! O, (says he,) my Father has sent for me Home! Now I must go live with my Father, to eat and drink

at my Father's Table, to live in my Father's Presence, enjoy my Father's Love and Counsels! And this he rejoices in, and exultingly embraces the Messenger. 'Tis the very Case here, the Soul having all Things ready, all Things set right within, when Death comes 'tis but as a Messenger to him, to fetch him home to his Father's House, which he can welcome and embrace with Joy. O (says he) my Father has sent for me home, home to Heaven, there to live immediately in his Presence, and upon his Fulness; and now shall I be for ever with my Father; now I shall for ever feast my Soul with my Father's Love, and the constant View of my Father's Face: Now I shall *see him Face to Face*, whom there I could never see but *through a Glass darkly*: Now I shall see, and be for ever in the Embraces of my Sweet Lord, that bled for me, that died for me, *that trod the Wine press alone for me*: Now shall I enter into the *Glorious Liberty of the Children of God*: I have hitherto been in Bondage to Satan, in Bondage to my own Heart, which has all along wretchedly imposed upon me; but now I shall enter upon the *Glorious Liberty of the Children of God*: Now I shall *partake of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light*: Now I shall bathe my Soul in the Christian Streams of undefiled Pleasures, running fresh along the Banks of Eternity at my Father's Right Hand: Now I shall spend a whole Eternity in Praises, Doxologies and Hallelujahs to God and the Lamb, Now I shall have all my Spots and Wrinkles, my Sins and Sorrows, done away at once: Now
shall

shall I Sigh no more, and which is infinitely better, I shall Sin no more for ever: No more complain of dark Visions, and short Visits from God; no more complain of Distances and Alienation between him and my Soul for ever: There shall be no more Interruption of Communion with my Sweet Saviour: but I shall stand in his Presence, and behold his Face for evermore: In a Word, hereby Death, the King of Terrors, becomes the King of Comforts to the Soul; and a Man comes to die both happily and comfortably. Some Men die neither happily nor comfortably; and Such is the Case of all that die out of Christ; they die in their Sins; they die to be damned for ever. Some die happily, but not comfortably: Such is the Case of Poor Christians dying under Desertion, whose Sun sets in a Cloud; they die in the Dark, not knowing what shall become of their Souls to Eternity, which yet go safe to Heaven, being Built upon the Rock of Ages, the Lord Jesus Christ. Some die both happily and comfortably: Such is the Case of all those who have all Things set right between God and them, all things ready and in order, before a Dying Hour comes. Some die presumptuously, thinking all is right and well in the Matters of their Souls, when indeed nothing is so; that is sad for Eternity: The Lord deliver your Souls and mine from such an *Exit*. Some die trembling or doubtingly, not knowing how Things are with them, whether well or ill, but they fear ill, that is sad, at least for a time: The Lord carry us above such an *Exit*. Some (viz. well ordered)

Be

dered Souls) die fiducially, knowing Things to be right between God and them; and that is comfortable both for Time and Eternity. Well then, if hereby we come to have such a Glorious Victory over Death and the Grave, it must then be a great Attainment to have all Things in order between God and us, and consequently greatly our Concern to have Things so.

2. Hereby we come to have a Rich and Glorious Entrance ministered to us into Everlasting Life and Glory, into Heaven and Blessedness. As hereby we come to be Glorious Conquerors over the Natural Death, so hereby we come to have a Rich and Glorious Entrance ministered to us into the Eternal Life; which also carries much Sweetness and Blessedness in it, 2 Pet. 1. 5. *And besides this, giving all Diligence, add to your Faith Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, &c.* That is, grow as compleat in Grace as possibly you can, make sure of your Salvation, make all ready in the Matters of your Souls: And what then? *So an Entrance shall be ministered to you abundantly into the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* And is not this a Blessed Attainment? Take this in Three Things.

1. Hereby the Soul comes to enjoy much of Heaven here upon Earth; much of Blessedness and Glory whilst on this Side Blessedness and Glory: Then hath a Man an abundant Entrance ministered unto him into Heaven and Glory, when he hath much of Heaven and Glory given out to him here on Earth, large Earnest, and First-fruits: And this the Soul has

has that hath all Things right in the Matters of his Spiritual State, all Things ready and in order within. Hence we read sometimes of the *Earnest*, sometimes of the *First-fruits of the Spirit*, Eph. 1. 14. Rom. 8. 28. And the Soul that is most ready has the greatest Earnest and First-fruits; that is to say, the greatest Beginnings of Heaven here upon Earth; for that which makes us ready for a Dying Hour is something of Heaven dropped into the Soul Here.

2. Hereby he comes to go triumphantly from Earth to Heaven, to go to Heaven and Glory with a Crown upon his Head; and is not this a sweet Attainment? Then hath a Man an abundant Entrance into Heaven and Glory when he goes triumphantly thither; when a Man passes to Heaven and Glory with Visions thereof in his Eye, and Prelibations thereof in his Soul, with a clear Witness and Evidence in his Spirit, that he is going to possess the Fulness thereof with God and Christ for ever: When a Man enters into Life without any Rebukes from God or his own Conscience, without any stumbling through Doubting or Unbelief; this is the Happiness of such as have all Things well in their Souls before a Dying Hour comes. It is with such in Death, as it was with *John* in a Vision, *Rev. 4. 1.* They (as it were) hear a Voice from Heaven, saying, *Come up hither*, and immediately they are in the Spirit. Some poor Souls croud into Heaven through a Throng of Doubts and Unbelief, Difficulties and Despondencies, through many Fears and Temptations.

tion ; insomuch that it might be truly said of them, that they are *scarcely saved*, as the Apostle's Expression is ; but others go through none of these : They go Triumphantly, with a Crown upon their Heads, as it were. So Paul 2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8. *I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my Departure is at Hand ; I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith : Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, shall give at that Day, and not unto me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.* Methinks I see how his Holy Soul went Triumphantly to the Throne of God, and the Lamb. When David and the House of Israel brought up the Ark of the Lord, it was with Shouting, and with the Sound of the Trumpet ; so when such a Soul goes to Rest, 'tis with a kind of Shouting and Triumph amongst the Saints themselves, who all reach the same Heaven and Glory at last. There's a very great deal of Difference in their Death, and in their going to that Heaven and Glory. As you know, Two Ships may arrive at the same Harbour, yet with much Difference as to the manner of their coming in : The one makes a shift to get in, but 'tis with her Anchors lost, her Sails torn and rent, her Flags down, her Masts broken, and the like ; but the other comes in bravely, riding as it were in Triumph, with her Sails spread, her Anchors safe, her Flag flying, her Trumpet is sounding, and her Mariners shouting. So great Difference there is in the Passing of Saints to Heaven and Blessedness. Now
 what

what an Attainment must it be to go with Shoutings and Triumph !

3. Hereby the Soul comes to be admitted to, and invested with, an eminent Fulness of Blessedness and Glory with God for ever. Then has a Man an abundant Entrance into Heaven and Glory, when he is admitted to, and invested with, an eminent Fulness of Glory and Blessedness in Heaven for ever: And this he hath, who hath all right and ready in the Concerns of his Soul when he comes to die : Such an one receives a full Reward, as the Expression is, 2. Epist. John. 8. *and has much Fruit abounding to his Account*, Phil. 4. 7. And O what a Sweet and Blessed Attainment does this speak it to be, to have all in order against a Dying Hour comes ! Now if it be such an Attainment to have Things set right and in order in our Souls against a Dying Hour, then surely it must needs be highly our Concern to have all Things so.

C H A P. IV.

Which shews the State of Men and Women under Death as a farther Evidence of our Assertion.

AS to have all Things ready and in order when a Dying Hour comes, is an High and Glorious Attainment, so such is the State and Condition of Men and Women under Death, that

that it cannot but be highly their Concern to have all Things set right, all Things ready in the Matters of their Souls, when they come to Die. This I will set before you in Three Propositions.

First Proposition is this, *That such is the State and Condition of Men and Women under Death, that there is no return for them into this Life any more for ever.* When once a Man's Sun is set, it never rises more; when once a Man has his Exit, is gone off the Stage of this World, he never rises more; there is no more any Part to be acted here by him. This you have in the Text, *Before I go hence, and be no more; that is, no more in this World.* So Job 7. 7, 8, 9, 10. *O remember that my Life is Wind, my Eye shall no more see God: The Eye of him that hath seen me, shall see me no more; Thine Eyes are upon me, and I am not. As the Cloud is consumed and vanisheth away, so he that goeth down to the Grave shall come up no more: He shall return no more to his House, and his Place shall know him no more.*

Again, Job 10. 20, 21. *Are not my Days few! Cease then, and let me alone, that I may take Comfort a little, before I go whence I shall not return, even into the Land of Darkness, and the Shadow of Death.* And again, Job 16. 22. *When a few Days are come, then shall I go the Way whence I shall not return.* All shewing that when a Man is once gone off the Stage of this World there is no return for him any more.

Second Proposition is this, *That such is the State of Men and Women under Death that there is nothing to be done for their Souls: There is nothing to be mended that is amiss, nothing to be set in order that shall be found out of order.* Death (my Beloved) is not the Time of working, but of receiving the Reward of our Work: Death leaves us under an Utter and Eternal Impossibility of ever doing any Thing for another World; therefore *whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do (saith Solomon) do it with all thy Might; for there is no Work nor Counsel in the Grave, whither thou goest, Eccles. 9. 10.* And I must work the Works of him that sent me while it is Day; because the Night cometh, when no Man can Work, saith Christ, *John 9. 4.* Death is a State of Darknes, and deprives us of all Helps, Advantages and Opportunities, of ever doing any Thing for the Good of our Souls: There is no repenting, no believing, no turning to God, in the Grave: There is no assuring Pardon of Sin, no getting an Interest in Jesus Christ, no making our Calling and Election Sure there: O no! These Things must be done now, or they can never be done; and if they be never done, our Souls are for ever undone. 'Twas an Epicurean Saying of him who said, *Eat, Drink, Play; for after Death there is no Pleasure:* But it would be a Christian Saying to say to you, and my own Soul, Love God, pray to him, seek his Face, repent, believe, make sure of Christ; for after Death none of these are to be done: They must be done here, or never.

Third

Third Proposition is this, *That such is the State of Men and Women under Death, that the Soul is actually and irreversibly stated and concluded in its Eternal Condition: The Soul's Eternal State is absolutely fixed, and unchangeably determined, without any Alteration for ever.* 'Tis an Observation among the School-men, that look what befel the Angels that sinned, that in Death befalls wicked Men, those that are not ready for a Dying Hour. The Angels immediately upon their Sinning, were stated in an irreversible Condition of Woe and Misery; and wicked Men, unready Souls, immediately upon Death, are irreversibly stated in a like Eternal Condition; they are Eternally Sealed up under Damnation. And the Devils may as soon get out of those Chains of Eternal Darkness, whereinto they are cast, and in which they are locked up, being reserved unto Judgment, as such Persons can change or reverse that Condition. The Truth is, Death, whenever or where-ever it comes, is as a determining Thing, it concludes the Soul for ever under an unalterable State of Life or Death, of Happiness or Misery; for, *as the Tree falls, so it lays*; Eccles. 11.3. Hence in Death, the Spirit, the Soul, is said to return to God, Eccles. 12.7. Upon which a learned Man has this Observation; God (saith he) receives the Soul of Man, when he dies, to himself; and having received it, he delivers it either to the Holy Angels, that by them it might be carried to Heaven, if it hath been Holy and Good; or he delivers it to the Evil Angels, by them to be dragged into Hell, if it hath been

been ungodly. Hence the Apostle tells us, *after Death comes Judgment*, Heb 9. 27. By which is meant the particular Judgment of every Man and Woman immediately upon Death, which is nothing else but the stating of the Soul in an Eternal Condition. Hence also, when *Dives* is brought in, desiring that *Lazarus* might dip the tip of his Finger in Water to cool his Tongue, Answer is made that it cannot be, forasmuch as there is no going for any, either from Hell to Heaven, or from Heaven to Hell, because *there is a Gulf fixed*, Luke 16. 26. Noting the Unalterableness of that State which Death sets Men down in, whether of Happiness or Misery. Well then, if such be the State of Men and Women under Death, as we have heard, then surely 'tis highly our Concernment to have all ready, all in order, against a Dying Hour comes. Having given you thus briefly the Demonstration of the Point, I shall make some practical Improvement of it.

C H A P. V.

Wherein Sinners are convinced of their Sin and Folly in the Neglect of their Concern. With Six weighty Pleas or Arguments to set home this Conviction, and awaken them to their Work.

AND is this indeed a Concern of so much Weight and Moment to us? Then how great is their Folly, and what Enemies are they.

they to their own Souls, who live in the Neglect of this great Business and Concern? (Which the most of Men do) God is pleased to spare, yea wonderfully to spare them for Days, for Weeks, for Months, for Years together, and that for this very End, that they should make themselves ready, and set all right in the Matters of their Souls, against a Dying Hour comes. But woe and alas for them! This they mind not, this they concern not themselves about, but inconsiderately live in a total Neglect thereof, than which what greater Folly can they be guilty of? Pray mind what God himself speaks in this Case, *Deuteronomy 32. 28, 29.* where he saith concerning Israel, *They were a Nation void of Counsel, nor was there any Understanding in them. And what then? O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter End.* Observe here Two Things are attested and verified by God himself: First, that it is a Point of the highest Wisdom the Sons of Men are capable of, seriously to consider their latter End; that is, to prepare for Death, and to set all Things right in the Matters of their Souls, so as that Things may issue well with them at last, and they may go off the Stage of this World with Comfort: Secondly, That not to do this is a Point of the greatest Folly: It doth evidently argue Men to be void of Counsel, and all true Understanding: It would have been their Wisdom to have considered their latter End; and their not doing of it argued them to be guilty of notorious Folly: These Things you may

see

See God himself attests and verifies here. And, my Beloved; what greater Folly can there be than for a Man to live in the Neglect of that which is of so much Weight and Importance for him to mind, as this is? Surely the greater the Concern is, the greater must our Folly be in the Neglect thereof; Yet this is the Folly that the most Men are guilty of; they mind not their latter End, their Dying Hour; at least not so as to make a timely Provision for it. God letteth them live many Years, and perhaps they rejoyce in them all; but they forget the Days of Darkness, which are many; they regard not the State of their Souls, nor how Things stand between God and them, in reference to another World. And O that this were not the Folly of too many of us, who profess the Belief of another Life, a future State. *We live and enjoy Good, but we put far from us the Evil Day;* as those are said to do, *Amos 6. 3.* God spares us Time after Time, but no Provision do we make for a Dying Hour. O how many of us have never yet set any Thing right in the Matters of our Souls, any Thing in order against the Time comes, when we are to go hence, and be no more; that have scarce ever had yet one serious Thought of Death, Judgment, or Eternity, nor made the least Tittle of Provision for them. And what shall I say to such? I would (if God saw Good) awaken them out of their Folly, and convince them of it: In order to which I would plead a little with them in Five or Six Particulars.

1. Must not we all go hence? *Solomon* tells us,

us, *there is a time to be Born, and a time to Die,* Eccles. 3. 2. and the one is as sure as the other. As sure as we have had a Time to be Born, so sure we shall have a Time to Die, and the Living know it: *The Living know that they shall Die,* saith Solomon, Eccles. 9. 5. Indeed they may well know it; for not only the Experience of between Five and Six Thousand Years tells them so, but it is what is appointed, what is infallibly determined, by the unchangeable Law and Decree of Heaven, Heb. 9. 27. nor can any Thing whatever exempt us from the Stroke of Death,

1. Youthful Strength and Vigour can't do it, for Young Men Die as well as Old: Strong Men Die as well as Weak. *One dieth in his full Strength,* saith the Holy Ghost, *being wholly at Ease and Quiet, his Breasts are full of Milk, and his Bones are moistned with Marrow,* Job. 21. 23. 24.

2. Worldly Pomp and Greatness can't do it, for Great Men Die as well as Mean Men; Rich Men as well as Poor Men. *Where is the House of the Prince?* (saith the Holy Ghost:) Answer is made, *He shall be brought to the Grave, and shall remain in the Tomb; the Clods of the Valley shall be sweet unto him, and every Man shall draw after him, as there is innumerable before him,* Job 21. 28, 32. 23. So in the 49th Psal. 16. 17, 18, 19. Be not thou afraid when one is made Rich, when the Glory of his House is increased, for when he dieth he shall carry nothing away, his Glory shall not descend after him; though while he lived he blessed his Soul,

Soul, and the like, he shall go to the Generation of his Father, he shall never see Light.

3. Humane Wisdom and Policy can't do it, for Wise Men die as well as Fools. So *Psal.* 49. 50. *Wise Men die, likewise the Fool*; yea, in many respects *Wise Men die as the Fool*; *Eccles.* 2. 16. Pray what is become of all the Wise Men and great Politicians that have lived in former Ages? Truly the Clods of the Valley cover them.

4. Spiritual Gifts and Graces can't do it, for Good Men die as well as Bad; Holy Men as well as Wicked Men: *The Righteous Man perisheth, and no Man layeth it to Heart*; and *Merciful Men are taken away*, *Isa.* 57. 1.

5. Eminency of Place and Service can't do it; *Your Fathers, where are they? And the Prophets, do they live for ever?* *Zech.* 1. 5. What higher Place than to be a Prophet, to be an Ambassador from God? and yet such die: Nothing (you see) can exempt us from the Stroke of Death: Why then should we neglect to prepare for it! I will close this Head with a Saying I have read in one of the Ancients: *What among Humane Affairs, says he, is more certain than Death? What more uncertain than the Hour of Death? Death compasses not Poverty, neither doth it reverence Greatness: It spares no Sex, no Manners, no Age, only it seems to come in at the Gate upon Old Men, but craftily it steals in upon Young ones.*

2. Doth not Death hasten upon us all? As we must all die, so Death hastens apace upon us; every Step we take is a Step towards Death

Death and the Grave, So we find, *Ecclef. 9. 10.* *Our whole Life is* (as one well observes upon that Place) *nothing else but a Journey towards Death and the Grave: Whether we Sleep or Wake, Eat, or Drink, Trade or Travel, Pray or Play, we are still hastening to the Grave: A Dying Hour hastens upon all; and how fast pray does it hasten upon us? Faster than the Weaver's Shuttle does to the end of the Web. My Days, saith Job, are swifter than a Weaver's Shuttle, Job 7. 6.* How fast does it hasten upon us? As fast, yea, faster, than a Post hastens to the end of his Stage, or a swift Ship to the Harbour, under the Advantage of Wind and Tide, or the swift flying Eagle to the Prey. *My Days are swifter than a Post, saith Job, they flee away, they see no Good: They are passed away as the swift Ship; as the Eagle hasteneth to the Prey, Job 9. 25, 26.* How fast does it hasten upon us? So fast as that for ought we know it will be upon us before we see the Light of another Day. *Thou Fool, this Night thy Soul shall be required of thee, Luke 10. 20.* How fast does it hasten upon us? So fast as that for ought we know it may be upon us the next Hour, yea, the next Moment: *They spend their Days in Mirth, and in a Moment go down to the Grave, Job 21. 13.* To be sure it will be upon us speedily, and it may be upon us suddenly. I pray consider, What are we? And what is our Life? Wind: *Job 7. 7. O remember that my Life is Wind: An Hand's breadth, Psal. 39. 5.* Behold, thou hast made my Days as an Hand's breadth, my Age is as nothing before thee. A

declining Shadow, *Psal. 102. 11. My Days are like a Shadow that inclineth, and I am withered like Grass. A Flower of the Field which is withered, and gone with the Wind. As for Man, his Days are as Grass, as a Flower of the Field, the Wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the Place thereof knoweth it no more, Psal. 103. 15, 16. And again, All Flesh is Grass, and the Goodliness thereof as the Flower of the Field, the Grass withereth, the Flower fadeth, because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: Surely the People is Grass, Isa. 40. 6, 7. Vanity and a Shadow. Man is like to Vanity, his Days are as a Shadow that passeth away, Psal. 144. 4. A Vapour which appears for a little Season, and is gone, Jam. 4. 14.* O how soon may one, or another, or all of us, be among the Dead? How soon may Death approach us?

3. What infinite Mercy is it that God hath spared us thus long, and still does spare us, to set all Things right, to make all ready for a Dying Hour? O my Brethren, how great is the sparing Mercy of God towards us! We have had some Ten, some Twenty, some Thirty, some Forty, some Fifty, some Sixty Years in the World, and still God spares us, still he lets us live and enjoy Good: And why all this, think you? surely to set all Things right in our Souls, to make ready for a Dying Hour; and shall we yet neglect it? God forbid. O Sirs, think a little, I beseech you, with your selves, how long since the Grave might have swallowed us up, and the bottomless Pit have shut its Mouth upon us? How long since might Time and

and Days have been at an End with us, and our Souls staid in a miserable Eternity. But still God spares us, and yet we are in the Land of the Living, with a Door of Mercy and Grace yet open unto us, at least a Possibility left us of knowing the Things of our Peace in our Day, of making Provision for Death and Eternity. And O what a Mercy is this ! I would fain a little quicken both you and my self by this Consideration ; and in order thereunto let me plead a little particularly with you.

1. Consider how long God hath spared, and does spare you, beyond what he does, and has Thousands and Ten Thousands of others: God does not spare all at that rate which he has spared, and does still spare us: Alas: How many Thousands are there now free among the Dead, who came into Being long since we did ? Their Glass is run, their Sun is set, their Day is over, their Hopes and Expectations are all at an end: Their Souls are staid in an Eternal Condition, a Condition that will admit of neither Change nor Period for ever ; and yet we are spared still: They came into the World long after us, and are gone into Eternity long before us: Yea, how many are there that never arrived to the one half of those Years that we have arrived unto ? Their Sun hath set in the Morning. How many of us have outlived our Yokefellowes, our Children, our Servants, our Friends and Acquaintance ? And yet we stand on our Ground ? and all this that we might prepare for a Dying Hour. *This Patience of God*

Preparation for Death.

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should lead to Repentance, Rom. 2. 5. And O that it might so do!

2. Consider how much we have provoked God, and what Advantage we have given him in Justice against us: I would say here, as Christ speaks in another Case, Luke 13. 2. Suppose ye that those Galileans, (whose Blood Pilate mingled with their Sacrifices) were Sinners above all the Galileans, because they suffered such Things? I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish; or those Eighteen upon whom the Tower of Siloam fell, and slew them, think ye they were Sinners above all Men that dwelt in Jerusalem? I tell you nay, but except ye repent ye shall all likewise perish. So say I here, suppose ye that those that are gone down to the Gates of the Grave, and the Bars of Death, before us, were greater Sinners than we? I tell you nay, but except we repent we must all likewise perish. We have sinned as well as they, and possibly in many Regards more than they: To be sure we have all over and over deserved long since to have been covered with the Shadow of the Night of Eternal darkness. O how hath the Patience of God been tired, and his Long-suffering put to it, by us! What Burden have we been to his Soul! Some of us have cause to think that we have been as great a Burden to God as most that ever lived. How justly may the Blessed God complain of many of us, That we have made him to serve with our Sins, and wearied him with our Iniquities, as he did them of old; Isa. 43. 24. That we have broke his Vearn

with our whorish Heart, whereby we have departed from him. Ezek. 6. 9. That our Sins have pressed him down, as a Cart is pressed that is full of Sheaves. Amos 2. 13. Alas! Alas! How have we wallowed in our Pollutions, and acted out the Enmity and Rebellion of our Natures against him? How have we rejected his Word, resisted his Spirit, despised his Grace, trampled upon his Son, refused many and many an Offer of Love, and many a Sweet Call, and Blessed Invitation, to come to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb? And yet that he should still spare us: O what Mercy is this, In 1 Pet. 3. 20. we read, That the long suffering of God waited in the Days of Noah: And truly, my Beloved, it waits as much in our Days; and our Provocations be as many and as high against him as theirs of that Generation were. O Sirs, why are we not in Hell? Why are we not Sealed and Shut up among the Damned? Why have we one Call more, one Offer more, one Season of Grace more? Verily 'tis all Rich Mercy; O that it might lead us to Repentance!

3. Consider how sad it had been with us had the Lord taken that Advantage against us which we have over and over given him. Suppose (my Beloved) God had not spared us, but had cut us off, as he might long since, what now had become of us? And where now had we been? Had you died of such and such a Sickness you had been in, when possibly a Sentence of Death was passed upon you, both by your self and others, and there was
really,

really but a Step between Death and you, where and how miserable had you now been? Had you not been now in the Flames, eternally separated from God and Christ, being Godless and Christless? Have you not now cause to fear you had been in as irrecoverable Condition as the Devils themselves are in, Sealed up under Wrath and Condemnation, past all Hopes and Possibility of Mercy for ever? *Whither had I gone, (saith Austin) if then (speaking of the time he was in his Sins) I had gone hence? Whither had I gone but into the Flames, and into Eternal Torments, answerable to my Sins?* May not we say the like? But blessed be God it is yet Time and Season with me and you; we are spared to this Hour, that we might provide for Death and Eternity. O Sirs, suppose you or I were among the Damned; suppose we were as they are Sealed up under Wrath, and separated from God, left under an utter Impossibility of ever seeing his Face, how sad then would our Condition be? Why thus it might have been with us! O what Mercy is it then that God has spared us, and does spare us as he does? And how should it awaken us to our Work?

4. Consider how much more sad it may, and will yet be with us, in case we provide not for a Dying Hour. Truly the longer God spares us, if we answer not his End in his sparing Mercy, the more miserable shall we be for ever. It will be sad to perish at all; but it will be doubly sad to perish under the Long-suffering of God, under the Abuse of so much Good-

ness, and long Patience: O to have many Days and many Years Patience and Goodness come to Witnels against a Man at last, how sad will this be? Think of, and seriously lay to Heart, that Scripture, *Rom. 2. 4, 5. Despisest thou the Riches of his Goodness, and Forbearance, and Long-suffering, not knowing that the Goodness of God leadeth thee to Repentance! But after thy Hardness and Impenitent Heart, treasurest up to thy self Wrath against the Day of Wrath, and Revelation of the Righteous Judgment of God.* Every Day which God in his Patience affords us, if we be not led to Repentance, is a Day of treasuring up Wrath, heaping up to our selves Wrath against the Day of Wrath, when Wrath shall come upon us to the utmost. Well, think then what a Mercy it is that God spares you as he does; and what an Obligation this sparing Mercy of his is upon you, to set all Things right in the Matters of your Souls against a Dying Hour comes.

4. Are you sure that those Helps and Advantages which you now enjoy to further you in your Work will always last and be enjoyed by you? Suppose, my Beloved, that God should yet spare you, and prolong your Days in the Land of the Living, yet O how soon may all your Helps and Advantages to further you in this great Work be withdrawn from you! Now blessed be God you enjoy many blessed Helps and Advantages for your Furtherance in this great Work, but how quickly may they all be gone?

1. How soon may the Reproofs, the Coun-
sels,

sels, the holy Examples of your Godly Friends, Ministers and Relations, be withdrawn from you? Now you enjoy the loving Reproofs, the wholesome Counsels, the holy Examples, of such and such Friends and Relations; one reproves you for Sin, another quickens you to Duty; one dehorts you from the World and Carnal Pleasures, another perswades you to close with Christ, and walk with God, to pursue after Heaven, and Eternal Life; one wooes and beseeches you, another charges and commands you to labour and know God, and to live to him, to provide for another Life, and they shall shew you the Path of Life; they tread the Way to Heaven in your Sight: All which are great Helps and Advantages to further you in this great Concern of yours. But how soon may all this be withdrawn? Thy Friends, thy Ministers, thy Relations, will speedily be lodged in the Dust, and thou shalt never have a Word of Reproof, a Word of Counsel, a Word of Quickning, a Word of Encouragement, or a Pattern of Faith and Holiness, set before thee by them any more for ever; which would be a Dreadful Thing. Now the Godly Father, Mother, Yoke-fellow, Master, Friend, and Acquaintance, is plying thee with Counsels and Instructions for the good of thy Soul, to Morrow it may be he or she goes down to the Gates of the Grave, and then no more of this for ever.

2. How soon may the Word and Ordinances of God, which you now enjoy, be withdrawn from you? Now you enjoy the Word

and Ordinances of God ; you go from Ordinance to Ordinance ; you have *Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept*, as it is, *Isa. 28. 10.* Yea, let me tell you, *you see and hear those Things which many Prophets and Righteous Men have desired to see and hear, but saw and heard them not, Mat. 13. 16.* O how is *Life and Immortality brought to Light* to you ! How is the Way of Salvation made plain and manifest before you ! What Glorious Discoveries ! What Blessed Revelations ! What Sweet and Frequent Tenders of Christ are made to you ! How freely are you called to the *Marriage-Supper of the Lamb* ! How lovingly doth Christ invite you to himself ! How kindly does he stand knocking at the Door of your Souls ! O (my Beloved) I may now say to you, as *Paul to the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 6. 2.* *Beloved ! Now is the Accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation.* O what Helps and Advantages are these ! But how soon may they all be gone ? How soon may the Word of God be withdrawn ? How soon may your Light be put out, and your Souls left in Darkness, not knowing whither to go ? Remember that Word of Christ, and lay it to Heart, *John 12. 35.* *Yet a little while is the Light with you, walk while you have the Light, lest Darkness come upon you ; and he that walketh in Darkness knoweth not whither he goeth. While you have the Light, believe in the Light, that you may be the Children of the Light.* It is a great Question whether we may not lose Gospel Ordinances and all, and where are we then ?

3. How soon may the Motions and Strivings of the Spirit of God be withdrawn from you? Now you have the Motions and Strivings of the Spirit of God in you, and with you; *he moves upon the Face of the Water* in your Souls; he moves and strives in and by the Word and Ordinances, Mercies and Afflictions; now you have enlightning, and then you have quickning Influences from him. Now he shews you your Work, and then he renders you his Assistance; now he discovers the Odiousness of Sin to you, and then he displays the Beauty, Sweetness and Excellency of Christ and Holiness before you: But alas! How soon may all this be at an End? Think of that Terrible Word, *Gen. 6, 3. My Spirit shall not always strive with Man.* God may possibly the next Day, yea, the next Hour, say to his Spirit concerning one or another of us, Let him alone; strive no more with him, move no more in him, convince him no more, persuade him no more, draw and allure him no more; he is addicted to his Lusts, and to this World, let him alone; he has no Mind to Heaven, no Desires to make any Provision for another World, let him alone; he is unwilling to see beyond Time to Eternity, he is given to his Carnal Pleasures, let him alone; he has a Resisting, Gainsaying Spirit, let him alone. O how soon these, and all other Helps and Advantages you now enjoy, may be withdrawn, who knows? You have all these together in one Scripture, which I desire you to lay to Heart, *Luke 19. 41. 42. When he was come near he beheld the*

City (speaking of *Jerusalem*) and wept over it, saying, *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy Day, the Things which belong to thy Peace, but now they are hid from thine Eyes.* They had a Day wherein they did enjoy the Things of their Peace ; they might and should have improved their Day, and the Things of their Peace, by securing their Eternal State ; but they neglected it, and now all these are withdrawn from them, which caused the Lord of Glory, the Joy of the whole Earth, to weep over them, so woful, miserable and deplorable, he saw their Condition to be : And how sad will it be with you if once Christ should come to say over you that Dismal Word, *Now they are hid from your Eyes ?*

5. Is it an easie Matter (think you) to set Things right in your Souls, and to make Things ready for a Dying Hour ? Suppose (my Beloved) that you should yet live many Days, and withal, your Helps and Advantages for the Good of your Souls should be continued to you, yet is it an easie Work which you have to do ? And shall you have Time and Days to spare ? Believe it, Sirs, all will be little enough to set Things aright, to make Things ready, for a Dying Hour. Pray consider with me these few Things as to this.

1. Consider in what a Woful Disorder all Things are at present with you, and how utterly unready for a Dying Hour : I will give you the Scripture state of your Case ; you are *dead in Trespasses and Sins*, under whole Loads and Mountains of Scarlet Crimson Guilt ; *without*
Christ

Christ, without Hope, without God in the World, alienated, and Enemies in your Minds, by wicked Works; yea, Enmity itself against God and Christ; full of Sin, both within and without; nothing but Sin, having no Good dwelling in you; void of all Grace, all true Spiritual Life; under the Power and Predominancy of Lust; serving divers Lusts and Pleasures, and carried Captive by the Devil at his Will: Closely glued to, and deeply in Love with this World; ignorant of God, and of the great Mystery of the Father, and of Christ; at least having no saving Knowledge of them; no Savour of Heaven, no Relish of Spiritual Things in your Souls; wallowing in your Blood and Gore, being filthy and abominable, to every good Work reprobate; the Heart strongly averse from God and all Good, and vigorously bent to Sin and Vanity; nothing of Heaven within, but full of Hell, full of the Spirit and Image of the Devil; under the Law of Sin, Strangers to the Law of Grace; no Union with Christ, no Oil in the Vessel; Poor, Miserable, Blind and Naked; at most, having but the Form, and denying the Power of Godliness. This is your Condition. O what Disorders are these! And what an unready Posture are you in for Death and Eternity?

2. Consider how great a Thing it is to be ready for Death; ready indeed, and to have all Things set right, and in order, against a Dying Hour comes; and how much is requisite in order thereunto. 'Tis a great Saying of an Holy Man; *No one (saith he) can joyfully welcome Death, but he that has been long composing*

his Spirit, and making ready for it. O my Beloved, to be indeed ready to quit the World, to go into the Divine Presence, the Great, the Holy, the Glorious Presence of God, to be ready to enter upon the Beatifical Vision, to possess a Mansion in the Father's House, to join with an Heavenly Host of Angels and Spirits of Just Men made Perfect, in Eternal Praising, Admiring, and Adoring of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, believe it, this is a great Thing, and great Things are requisite thereunto. This calls for a near Union with Christ, a firm Peace with God, clear Evidences for Heaven : For much Grace and Holiness, much Heavenliness and Spirituality of Mind, much Weanedness from this World, much Holy deadness to Sin, Self, and the Creature, much Victory over Corruption, much Soul-cleansing, much Purity of Heart and Affection, much Diligence and Faithfulness in Duties ; and (my Beloved) are these little Things, or Things easily to be accomplished and attained unto ? O Sirs ! The Scripture, speaking of these Things, calls upon us to *strive*, Luke 13. 24. *to give all Diligence in the pursuit of them*, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 10. *to manage and dispatch them with Fear and Trembling*, Phil. 2. 12. All which tells us that they are great Things and not easily to be accomplished and attained unto ; therefore we had need look after this, and neglect no longer.

3. Consider what Lets and Hindrances, Difficulties and Oppositions, you must expect to meet withal in your minding and managing
this

this Work; not only is the Work itself great, but you must also expect many Lets and Hindrances, much Difficulty and Opposition, in the Managing of it: You must expect Lets and Oppositions from the Devil, he is the Enemy of Souls: And you must expect that he will make use of all Wiles, Methods and Devices, all his Craft and Cunning, all his Artifices; and that he will stir up all his Wrath and Malice against you: He is your Enemy, and a Subtile, Potent, Indefatigable Enemy, an Enemy *that always goes about seeking whom he may devour*, 1 Peter 5. 8. You must expect Lets and Oppositions from the World too, from the Men of the World, from the Things of the World, from the Smiles of the World, from the Frowns of the World. The World is your Enemy as well as the Devil: So much is intimated. 1 John 5. 4. And you must expect Opposition from it: The Men of the World will discourage you; the Things of the World will divert you; the Troubles of the World will mightily depress you; the Enjoyments of the World will miserably ensnare and entangle you; the World is of a marvellous Bewitching Ensnaring and Entangling Nature: It is indeed opposite to God and all Goodness, and so to the whole Interest of our Souls. *The Friendship of the World is Enmity to God.* Jam. 1. 4. The World will plead for, and take up your Time, your Strength, your Thoughts. O the Hindrance that the World is to Thousands, and Ten Thousands, in the Work of their Souls! Truly, this ruins Multitudes for ever,
This

This ruin'd him we read of, *Mat. 19. 32.* and saith Paul, *Demas hath forsaken us, having embraced this present World,* *2^d Tim. 4. 10.*

You must expect Lets and Hindrances also from your own Hearts ; yea, from them above all others. *The Heart* (the Holy Ghost tells us) *is deceitful above all Things, and desperately wicked, &c. Jer. 17. 9.* And who of us does at all observe it, and the working of it, does not find it to be so ? Now it will openly oppose you, then it will secretly seduce and enlure you ; now it will carry you off, and draw you back from God and Duty, *Heb. 3. 12.* then it will turn you aside to Sin and Vanity, *Isa. 44. 20.* now it will divert you from Duty, then it will make you dead and slothful in Duty : 'Tis indeed wholly set against all that is good ; and it hath a Thousand Ways to hinder you in your great Work ; and you must expect that it will do its utmost to hinder you. This is a Close Enemy, it is always at Hand ; there is no end of its Opposition till Life itself ends. One of the Ancients (I remember) breaks out into a Sad Exclamation against his own Heart thus, *My Heart* (saith he) *is a Wicked Heart, a Vain Heart, a Roving, a Wandering Heart ; my Mind is exceeding Light, wonderful Inconstant, a Vagabond, and a Fugitive ; it changes itself into all Shapes ; it will, and it will not ; 'tis like a Leaf moved and carried about with the Wind. My Vain and Importunate Heart hales me now to the Market, and then to Strifes and Brawlings ; now to Feasting, and then to Impure Lust ; now the Flesh is enflamed with*
Sordid

Sordid Titillations, then the Mind is defiled with Filthy Cogitations. And who of us may not make the same Complaint? Yea, such is the Enmity and Oppositions of our own Hearts against Heaven, and the Things of Heaven, that many times when we most resolve and set our selves to follow God, and to pursue the Work of our Souls, then they set us most back. It was a great Speech of that same Father, This (saith he) is my Daily Exercise; with my whole Strength I bend to thee, and would mount up to God and Heaven, but by how much the more strongly I endeavour to come up to thee, by so much the more powerfully I am cast into the Earth, into my self, and even under my self captivated to my Lusts.

And so is it often with us: Lets then and Oppositions must be expected by us on all Hands; and we had need therefore the more to awaken to our Work. 'Tis true, if you will engage in good Earnest in the Work of your Souls, your Helps and Encouragements will be greater than your Lets and Discouragements; you will have more with you than against you; you will have God with you, and Christ with you, and the Comforter with you, and all the Graces of the Covenant with you; be encouraged therefore to set upon Soul-work. Now lay all these Things together, and see if it be an easie Matter to make ready for a Dying Hour; and if it be not, why should we neglect, why should we delay any longer?

6. How terrible will Death be to you? And what a dreadful Change will it make with you,

you in case you still neglect to make ready for it! suppose (my Beloved) you go on in the Neglect of this great Concern, *putting far from you the Evil Day*, what (think you) will the Issue of it be? Will not Death be most terrible to you when you shall be called to conflict with it? Will it not make a Dreadful Change with you? Surely it will. Death to an unready Soul, what will it be? It will be the Period of all his Mercies, of all his Comforts, of all his Hopes: For such an One receives all his Good Things in this Life before Death comes, *Luke 16. 25.* It will be the sending of him to his own Place, the cutting him down as Fewel for Everlasting Burnings: It will be (as a Worthy Divine speaks) *as the taking up of a Draw bridge, and the pulling down of the Flood gate of God's Eternal Wrath, to let in the Deluge of it upon his Soul for ever.* It will be a Change to him; but what Change will it be? Surely a very sad one.

1. A Change from Earth to Hell: And is not this a sad Change? *The Wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God, Plal. 19. 17.* And we read of the *Rich Man*, (who was unready for Death) *that being dead he was in Hell, Luke 22. 23.*

2. A Change from Light to Darkness: And is not that a sad Change? The Holy Ghost speaking of such an One, tells us, *God shall drive him out of the Light into Darkness, and chase him out of the World, John. 18. 18.* Here Wicked Men enjoy the Light of Creature-Comforts, but God will drive them out of these into the Dark-

Darkness of Eternal Milery into utter *Darkness*, Matt. 25. 30. into *Blackness of Darkness*, Jude 13.

3. A Change from pleasure to Pain, from delight to Torment; a sad Change it is, from pleasure and delight in Sin, to Pain and Torment for Sin, *Luke 19. 23.* Here the Soul sports himself in the pleasures and delights of Sin, and he thinks he can never have enough; but then there will be an end of all those pleasures and delights, and nothing but Pain, Torment, and Vexation, will succeed them.

4. A Change from the Offers of Grace to the Revelation of Wrath: *Shall thy Loving kindness be declared in the Grave, or thy Faithfulness in Destruction?* (saith the Psalmist) in *Psal. 88. 11.* True, in *1. Pet. 3. 19, 20.* we read of *Christ's Preaching by the Spirit to the Spirits in Prison*; that is, to the Souls in Hell: But mark, when was it that he preached to them? Not when in Prison but in the Days of *Noah*, when they lived in the World. There is never an Offer of Grace and Love made to Souls in the Grave; While Life lasts the Soul hears the joyful Sound: And O the sweet Offers, the Gracious Tenders, the Loving Invitations that are made to him in Christ, of Grace, of Eternal Life and Love! O the Wooings, the Meltings, the Intreatings, the Alluring of Divine Love to and over the Soul! But when Death comes, farewell all these; farewell all the sweet Offers of Christ, and all the Blessed Motions of the Spirit; then there's nothing but Wrath revealed, and Wrath shall
come

56 *The Great Concern: Or,*

come on the neglected Soul of the uttermost.

5. A Change from fair Probabilities, to utter Impossibilities of Life and Salvation; a sad Change still: *Now is the Accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation*; now, and not hereafter, 2. Cor. 6. 2. Now there is a fair Probability for the worst of Sinners to be saved, if they will look after Salvation, and mind their Eternal Concerns; Christ is both able and willing to save: To save was the End of his Coming into the World, and of all he did and suffered here, 1. Tim. 1. 15. Now they are Besought and Entreated to be reconciled to God, 2. Cor. 5. 19. 20. but when Death comes, that changes these fair Probabilities into utter Impossibilities of Life and Salvation. Therefore mark, *Now* (saith the Apostle) *is the Day of Salvation*; that is, now whilst Life lasts, and while the Gospel is preached.

6. A Change from Hope to Despair; a sad Change indeed. We read that *the Hope of the Hypocrite shall perish*, Job. 8. 13. and that *the Expectation of the Wicked shall perish*, Prov. 10. 28. Whether Men be open Sinners, or close Hypocrites, their Hopes at last shall all fail, and turn to Despair, despair of ever seeing God, or enjoying the least Tittle or *Iota* of Good for ever.

Thus Death will be Terrible to you, and make a dreadful Change with you, in case you neglect to make ready for it's coming; 'twill affright you as bad as the Hand-writing upon the Wall did that proud King, Dan. 5. 5, 6.

Which

Which made his Countenance change, his Thoughts to trouble him, and the Joints of his Loins to be loosed, and his Knees to smite one against another. O when Death comes, and thou shalt be found unready, how will thy Countenance change, thy Joints be loosed, thy Thoughts troubled, and thy Heart tremble within thee? In a Word, I will say to you as the Prophet spake of Old, Isa. 10. 3. *What will you do in the Day of Visitation? And whither will you flee for Help?* When Death comes what will you do? Which Way will you look? Will there be any Hope, any Help, any Refuge, for your Souls to flee unto? Alas! There will be none. Wilt thou then run to the Mercies of God, and cry, Lord, Lord? Alas! It will be in vain; he will say unto you, *Depart from me, I know you not*, Mat. 25. 11. 12. Wilt thou then labour to get Grace and Pardon? Alas! It will be too late; then the *Doer will be shut* against thee, *Matth. 25. 10.* Wilt thou then desire others to spare thee some of their Oil? Alas! That will be a vain Thing; they will tell thee they have but enough for themselves, *Matth. 25. 9.* Wilt thou then plead thy Gifts, Parts, and Services, for Christ? Alas! It will be to no Purpose unless thou hast done the Main Work; notwithstanding all thy Gifts and Services, he will send thee away with the Workers of Iniquity, *Mat. 7. 22. 23.* Wilt thou call upon the Rocks and Mountains to cover thee, and hide thee from the Wrath of him that sits upon the Throne? Alas! It will be in vain, *Rev. 6. latter end.* O Sinner! When thou shalt

shall see thy self launching out into the great Ocean of Eternity, and God shall as it were say to thee, by the Mouth of thy own Conscience, Well now, Times and Days are at an End with you, and will never dawn more, What hast thou done for thy Soul ? What Provision hast thou made for another World ? Is Christ thine ? Hast thou gotten thy Sins pardoned, and the like ? When it shall be thus, (I say,) what wilt thou then do, and whither wilt thou then look ? How wilt thou then cry out, *Undone, undone, I am lost for ever ! My Days are ended, and my Work is still to do ! Wo is me, what a God, a Christ, a Heaven, a Blessedness, a Glory, have I wilfully and foolishly lost ?* Truly thou, and such as thou, are the only Persons whose Death will be truly lamentable. I remember a Saying I have read in one of the Ancients ; *they (saith he) are to be bewail'd in their Death whom the Devils drag away to the Torments of the Infernal Pit, not they whom the Holy Angels do conduct to the Joys of Paradise ; they are to be bewailed, who after Death are by the Devils turned into Hell, and not they who by the Angels are placed or set down in Heaven.* O that these Things might convince you of your Folly, awaken your Souls ; and that so as yet to know the Things of your Peace in your Day, and the Time of your Visitation.

C H A P. VI.

Being a Call to all, Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, to address themselves to the great Work of making all ready for a Dying Hour.

WHAT is the Language of this? Verily, it calls aloud upon all, Good and Bad, Saints and Sinners, to make it our great Business to set all Things right in the Matters of our Souls, and make all ready for a Dying Hour: And O that we would make this Improvement of this great Truth, and of God's sparing Goodness to us! He spares us, and why does he spare us, but that we should set all Things right, and make all Things ready? O that we would now fall in with the End and Design of God herein, making it our great Care and Business in time to provide for Eternity, in Life to make ready for Death. Some of you, I verily believe, are about this Work, and the Lord prosper you in it; you know you were Born for Eternity; and you do endeavour to live for Eternity; your great Work in time is to make Provision for a Blessed Eternity. O happy Souls that you are! Others of us, and those by far the most, (I fear,) are utterly negligent in this Business; Death and Eternity are little minded by us; but we are in a Sleepy, Drowsie, Secure Spirit, and to such (methinks) this Truth speaks in a Language much like to that of the Ship-Master to *Jonah*, Chap. 1. 6. *What meanest thou,*

O Sleeper ? Arise, and call upon thy God, if so be he will think on us that we perish not. So what mean you, O you sleepy, drowsie, secure Souls ! Arise, make ready for a Dying Hour ; set all Things right, all Things in order, in your Spiritual Concernments, least Death come-upon you unawares, and you be lost for ever ; and to such of us I would say, as sometimes God did by the Prophet to *Hezekiah*, Isa. 38. 1. *Set thine House in Order, for thou shalt Die, and not Live.* So I say to you, set your Hearts in order, your Spiritual Concerns in order ; make all even between God and you, for you shall shortly Die, and not Live ; you shall shortly go hence, and be no more. And why should we not all do so ? If you be to change your Condition in the World, how Careful and Solicitous are you to have all Things ready and in order for that Change ? Why (my Beloved) you are shortly to pass under that great and last Change ; a Change from Time to Eternity ; and will you have no Care, no Solitude, to make ready for that Change ? If you are to take a Journey, though but a few Miles. or to make a Voyage into a strange Land, O-how are you concerned to have all Things ready, all Things in a prepared Posture, in order thereunto ? And (my Beloved) should not you be more concerned to make ready for your great Journey, your last and great Voyage ? You are making a Journey, a Voyage, out of Time into Eternity ; you are just launching forth into the great Ocean : And what, nothing in order, nothing ready, nothing

thing set right in order thereunto ? That is strange ! If you have some great Business, a Business of more than ordinary Importance to be done, or a Suit at Law to be tried or determined, O how close do you follow it ? And how careful are you to have all Things ready in order thereunto ? And (my Beloved) should you not be as careful and diligent to prepare and set all Things right for the great Business of your Souls in another World ? Have you any Business, any Concern of greater Importance to you, than the Concern of your Souls and Eternity ? If you are to appear before some Earthly Judge, especially if it be about a Matter that concerns your Life, O how thoughtful are you to have all Things ready and in order in reference thereunto ! And (my Beloved) should you not be as thoughtful and solicitous to make all ready, and to set all right, in order to your appearing before the Judge of all the Earth ; and that about a Matter which concerns the Life of your Souls, about a Matter of Eternal Life and Death ? Well, what shall I say ? Will you set about this great Business, this great Concern ? Or is it all one with you whether you live or die, are saved or damned to Eternity ? God yet spares you, blessed be his Name ; will you not set all right before you go hence and be no more ? Sinners, will you set about this great Business ? Your Work is wholly yet to do ; though it may be your Day is far spent, your Glass is almost run, your Sun near setting, and all your Work to do. Oh, 'tis high time

*time for you to awake out of Sleep, unless you mean to sleep the Sleep of Eternal Death. Saints, will you set about this great Business while God spares you ? You have done somewhat, but there is much more yet to be done ; there is much out of order yet in your Souls ; Grace weak, (it may be,) Corruption strong, Peace broken, Evidences blurr'd and blotted, Unbelief powerful within you, the Heart much estranged from God ; little Suitableness to Heaven in your Spirits, and the like ; will you now labour to recover Strength ? How many of us may complain as that Holy Man (St. Bernard) once did ? *I am ashamed to live because I am so unprepared,* surely this Truth concerns the best of us all : And if we understand our selves, we cannot but know it ; the Lord help us to know it effectually. And if after all you would indeed address to this great Work and Business, then I have several great and weighty Directions to propound to you for your Help therein, of which some more General, some more Particular ; and I would speak of each distinctly.*

C H A P. VII.

Wherein are Propounded several General Directions in order to a thorough Preparation of Soul for a Dying Hour.

Would you indeed set all Things right in your Souls, make all ready for a Dying Hour? Then in your most prosperous and flourishing State here, maintain a frequent and serious Remembrance of Death and the Grave upon your Spirits. *If a Man live many Years, (saith Solomon) and rejoyce in them all; yet let them remember the Days of Darknes, for they are many, Eccles. 11. 8.* By the Days of darknes here we are to understand Death, and the State of Death; the Abode of our Bodies in the Grave, which is *a Land of Darknes, and where the Light is as Darknes, Job 10. 20.* Now, saith he, though a Man live many Years, and rejoyce in them all; that is, *though a Man live long and prosperously, long and joyfully,* yet let him remember Death and the Grave, the Future State. 'Tis true, there are other Days of darknes which we are subject to in this World, and should be remembered by us: Days of outward darknes, the darknes of outward Trouble and Affliction; and Days of inward darknes, the darknes of spiritual Distress and Dereliction; and indeed is of marvellous Use to us in our Prosperity to remember these Days of darknes; but especially we should remember Death and the Grave

Grave: we should carry a living Remembrance of these Days of darkness daily upon us; and indeed our not remembering these Days of darkness is one great Cause why we are so unready for Death and the Grave as we are. When we are in the midst of our Enjoyments, and the Streams run pleasantly about us, we are too apt to forget these Days of darkness; We are so taken with our Earthly Comforts that we are loth to think of Death and Eternity, *putting far from us the Evil Day*, as those in their Enjoyments did, *Amos 6. 3.* And therefore when these Days come, they find us so unready, and our spiritual Concernments so discomposed, as usually they do. But (my Beloved) as ever you would have all right and in order in your poor Souls against a Dying Hour comes, let me recommend this to you as one special Help; maintain a deep and frequent Remembrance of Death and the Grave upon your Spirits; remember the Days of darkness, and that especially these Two Ways.

1. Remember them so as to have them much in your Meditations: Be much and frequent in the Contemplation of Death and the Grave! This the Holy Ghost calls a *considering our latter End* and withal mentions as a Business of great Importance to us, *Deut. 32. 29.* To consider, is to revolve a Thing in our Minds, and to keep it much in our Thoughts and Meditations. And thus we should consider our latter End, and remember the Days of darkness. This is that the Saints of

of Old have been much conversant in ; they were much and frequent in the Thoughts and Meditations of Death : As I might instance in the good Old Patriarchs, *Job, David*, and others : And 'tis what does marvellously conduce to our Preparation for it. *The Meditation of Death* (saith one) *is Life* ; it is that which greatly promotes our Spiritual Life ; therefore walk much among the Tombs, and Converse much and frequently with the Thoughts of a Dying Hour.

2. Remember them so as to have them daily in your Expectation. In the midst of all your Enjoyments expect Death's Approach daily : This is called *a waiting for our Change*. *All the Days of my appointed Time will I wait till my Change comes, Job. 14. 14.* And we are commanded *to wait for the coming of our Lord* ; as that which lyes in the directest Tendency to the exactest Readiness and Preparation for his coming, *Luk. 12. 36. Expect Death every Hour*, (saith one) *for 'tis every Hour approaching thee : In the Morning when thou risest, think with thy self this may be the last Day : In the Evening when thou lye'st down, think with thy self this may be the last Night I may ever have in this World. I know not when my Lord will come, whether in the Morning, or in the Evening, at Midnight, or at the Cock-crowing, therefore I will be always expecting his coming.* Woe and alas for us ! We are apt to talk of many Years yet to come as he did, *Luke 12. 6.* whereas we should live in the Expectation of Death every Moment. Thus let us consider the Days of darkness,

ness, it will marvellously conduce to the Preparation of the Soul for them : The Meditation and Expectation of Death will conduce much (among others) to these Four Things.

1. It will conduce much to our humbling and self-debasing : *Let a Man own himself to be a Mortal, (saith Austin,) and Pride will, it must, come down ! And think frequently of Death, (saith another) and thou wilt easily bring down thy Proud Heart.* Hence also the Consideration of Death is often in Scripture mentioned by the Holy Ghost as an Argument to make us humble. *Dust thou art, and to Dust thou shalt return, Gen. 3. 19.* as elsewhere.

2. It will conduce much to the weaning of our Hearts from this World, and the loosning of them from the Things here below : *The time is short, (saith the Apostle ;) What then ? What remaineth, that they that have Wives be as though they had none ; and those that weep as though they wept not ; and those that rejoice as though they rejoiced not ; those that buy as though they possessed not ; and, they that use this World as not abusing it ; for the Fashion of this World passeth away, 1. Cor. 7. 29. 30, 31.* He mentions the shortness of Time, as that the Meditation and Expectation whereof has the directest Tendency in it to wean and loose the Heart from all Things here below. And indeed, (as St. Bernard hath it) *he easily contemns all Things, who looks upon himself as Dying daily.*

3. It will conduce much to engaging the Heart to Heaven, and the Things of Heaven

to a Serious Pursuit of a Blessed Eternity. So we find, *Heb. 11. 13, &c.* *These all died in the Faith, (saith the Apostle) not having received the Promises; but having seen them afar off, and were perswaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were Strangers and Pilgrims on the Earth; that is, they were apprehensive they had but a little Time to stay here: And what then? They desired a better Country; that is, an Heavenly: The Apprehension they had of their Departure hence quickned them unto Earnest Desires and Pursuits after the better Countrey, the Heavenly Land: And indeed one great Reason why we breath no more, and press no more, after Heaven, and a Blessed Eternity, is because we so seldom remember these Days of darkness.*

4. It will conduce much to the Quickning of the Heart to Duty, and to Diligence and Faithfulness therein. Christ himself made use of it for this End, *I must work the Works of him that sent me while it is Day, the Night cometh when no Man can Work, John 9. 4.* Peter also, that Holy Apostle, made use of it to that End, *I will not be negligent (saith he) to do so and so in the Way of Duty, as knowing that shortly I shall put off this Tabernacle, 2 Pet. 1. 12, 13. 14.* The Consideration of the near Approach of his Death quickned him to his Work and Duty. And the Scripture propounds it, as that which has a Tendency to this Thing; *Whatsoever thy Hand findeth to do, do it with all thy Might, (saith Solomon,) for there is no Work nor Counsel in the Grave, whither thou*

art going, *Eccles.* 9. 10. He propounds the Consideration of our going to the Grave as a Means to quicken us to our present Work ; by all which we see how much the Serious Remembrance of the Days of darkness must needs contribute to our Readiness and Preparedness for these Days ; therefore be much in this Work. For my own Part, I have hardly found any one Thing more quickning and engaging upon my Spirit than this : And Souls, I would beg you, as you would live for ever, think often of Death.

2. Would you indeed set all Things right in your Souls, and make all ready for a Dying Hour ? Then be not fond of long Life here in this World ; but rather covet to live as much as possibly in a little time. I would speak of each distinctly.

1. Be not fond of long Life here in this World. A fond Hope and Desire of long Life here is one of the greatest Enemies to a True Preparation of Soul for our Departure hence. For pray observe, take a Man that is fond of long Life here, and all his Thoughts and Projects are for this World ; he is wholly taken up about, and carried out after the Concerns of Time, scarce allowing himself one Serious Thought for Death and Eternity : A sad Instance you have hereof in this Rich Man, *Luke* 12. 19. He reckoned upon many Years, upon a long Life here ; and what are the Things he is taken up about ? Verily the Things of this World only, the Increase of his Goods, and where to store his Treasures. Fond Hopes
and

and Desires of long Life here, will certainly produce great Delays, if not utter Neglects, in the great Work and Concern of our Souls and Eternity. As ever therefore you would have all right and well in the Concerns of your Souls when you come to die, be not fond of long Life here, but sit as loose in your Thoughts, Hopes and Desires, both of this Life, and all the Enjoyments of it, as possibly you can. And indeed (my Beloved) to reason it a little with you, why should you be fond of long Life here? Why should you cover a long Stay in this World? I would only plead with you in Two Things as to this.

1. What is this World, and what have we here, that we should here cover a long Stay? Is this World such a Sweet, such an Amiable, such a desirable Thing? It is an Angry World, a Frowning, a Dirty, a Bewitching, Ensnaring World: 'Tis a vast Howling Wilderness, a Strange Land, an House of Bondage, a Troublesome, Tempestuous Sea, an *Aeldama*, a Field of Blood; such I am sure 'tis oftentimes to the Poor Saints and People of God; and what have we here? Why, here we have *Fears within, and Fightings without, Troubles on every Side*, and from all Hands; From Friends, from Enemies, from Men, from Devils; here we have Sorrow, Snares, Losses, Wounds, Deaths, Dangers, Temptations, Seductions, Disappointments, *Vexation of Spirit*: And truly little else is to be expected by us here, except that which is worse than all this, (*viz.*) daily Raisings and Ebullitions of Lust, violent Eruptions

of Corruption, great Aboundings of Sin and Iniquity, both in our selves and others ; continual Breakings with God, and Departings from him, renewing and encreasing Sin and Guilt daily. Indeed this World is full of Sin, and Temptation to Sin : 'Tis (as *Austin* says) *tota Tentatio*, all Temptation ; and as 'tis all Temptation, so 'tis little else but Sin : And why should we covet a long stay here ? *Why* (says one of the Ancients) *should we so much desire that Life, in which, by how much the longer we live, by so much the more we sin ; and the more numerous our Days are, the more numerous will our Sins be ?* Who would desire to stay long in a Prison, or a Dungeon, in a State and Place of Sin and Sorrow ? And such is this World.

2. Is there not a better Life, a better Place, a better State for Souls to long and aspire after ? What do you think of the Life above, a whole Eternity spent in the Divine Presence, in the Bosom of Divine Love, a Life of Love, a Life of Pleasure, a Life of Joy, a Life of Admiration, a Life of Holiness, perfect and unspotted Holiness, a Life every way correspondent to the Divine Life, and the Divine Will ? Is not this a better Life ? *To be with Christ is best of all*, Phil. 1. 23. To possess a Mansion in our Father's House, prepared by our Lord and Head, Jesus Christ, for us ; to live for ever in a Vision and Fruition of Father, Son, and Spirit ; to dwell in the Heavenly City, where no unclean Thing can enter ; to join in with the Glorious Host of Saints and Angels above, and with them to spend a whole Eternity

nity in Songs of Praises and Hallelujahs to God and the Lamb ; to take up all our Waters at the Fountain-head ; and indeed to dive and bathe unchangeably in the Fountain of all Delights at the Father's Right-hand ; O how Sweet is this Life ! And how much to be desired by us ! In a Word, (my Beloved,) the Saints, when in the best Frame, have many of them been so far from being fond of long Life here, that indeed they have thought it long till the time came when they should go hence and be no more, crying out with an Holy Impatience, *Why is his Chariot so long a coming ? Why tarry the Wheels of his Chariot ?*

2. Cover to live much in a little Time. 'Tis said of the Reverend and Worthy Divine, Dr. *Preston*, that he desired to, and accordingly did, live much in a little Time. And our Lord himself (you know) did not live long in this World, but he lived much in a little Time ; he did much Work in a few Days for God and Souls. And indeed (my Beloved) 'tis not a long Life, but a fruitful Life, that is most amiable, most desirable, and most like his Life, who is Life itself. 'Tis not he that lives many Years, but he that lives much in a few Years, that is the most happy Soul. I know those whose Ambition it is not to live long, but to live fruitfully, and to do as much as possibly they can in a little Time. And might they have their Opinion or Choice it would be this, to live much in a little Time, and then have their Dismission to Rest. And (my Beloved) let this be your Choice and your Ambition ;

bition ; be casting about in your selves how you may live much in a little time ; how you may compass much Spiritual Work and Business in a few Days ; labour to treasure up much Grace, much Experience of God and his Love ; to bring a large Revenue of Glory to him, and the like. And for this End possess your Souls with a deep Sense of the exceeding Worth and Preciousness of Time ; and accordingly set your selves to redeem it, looking upon the Loss thereof to be the greatest Loss in the World. *Ephes. 5. 16.* we are commanded to *redeem the Time* ; and what is it to redeem the Time, but to esteem Time as precious as a Thing of incomparable Worth and Value ; and accordingly to make the best and highest Improvement of it for the Honour of God, and Good of our Souls, that possibly we can ? It is to fill up our Time with Duty, and our Duties with Grace ; to make use of Time for those Ends for which Time is given us ; not to Eat, and Drink, and Solace our selves in the Creature, but to Serve and Honour the Creator ! To *work out our Salvation* ; to get Acquaintance with God and Christ ; to make sure of Heaven, and a Blessed Eternity. O Sirs ! Look upon Time as precious ; so indeed it is ; Time is the most weighty and momentous Thing in the World ; 'Tis that which our Eternal ALL depends upon : According as we do, or do not, manage or improve our Time well, so will it go with us for ever. 'Tis a Sweet Meditation which I have read in a Discourse of an Holy Man : *This Life* (saith he) *of ours is most swift*

Swift ; and yet in it Eternal Life is either gotten or lost for ever. This Life of ours is most Miserable, and yet in it Eternal Happiness is either gotten or lost for ever. No less than a whole Eternity of Happiness or Misery, Salvation or Damnation, depends upon our Use and Management of our little Time here in this World. As the Tree falls so it lyes, Eccles. 11. 3. As it is with us when we go out of Time, so it will be with us to all Eternity ; and this we should be much in the Thoughts of, accounting therefore the Loss of Time to be the greatest Loss. 'Tis a weighty Saying which I have read in One of the Ancients, It is a great and heavy Loss indeed, (saith he) when we neither do Good, nor think Good, (and let me add, nor get Good,) but we suffer our Hearts to wander abroad about Vain and Unprofitable Things ; and yet is it too difficult to restrain or keep them back from these Things. Truly no Loss like the Loss of Time ; the Loss of Estate, the Loss of Trade, the Loss of this or the other outward Comfort, is nothing to the Loss of Time. These being lost may be recovered again ; but Time being lost can never be recovered more. Accordingly set your selves to redeem it, and do it as much as possibly you can, accounting that Day lost wherein you have not done something for God and your Souls. The Truth is, we live no more than we are conversant in the Work of God and our Souls ; for as for that which we call Life, that is not spent in this Work, it is not indeed to be accounted Life.

Thirdly, Would you indeed set all Things right in your Souls, make all ready for a Dy-

ing Hour? Then think much and often with your selves how great a Change Death will make with you whenever it comes. Death is a Change, and in many Respects the greatest Change which the Sons of Men are to pass through. *All the Days of my appointed Time will I wait till my Change come, Job 14. 14.* Job had many Changes, and great Changes; *Changes and War were upon him*, as he complained, *Job 10. 16.* but no Change like this of Death: This was the great Change, and this he waited for all his Days. Indeed Death is a great Change to every Man and Woman, come when or how it will; 'tis that (as you have heard) that deprives Men of all their Enjoyments here, which dissolves the Union between Soul and Body, which turns the Body to Dust and Putrefaction; and (which is unspeakably more than this) it is that thro' which the Soul enters into the Immediate Presence of God, and states it in Eternity; it is a Change from Time to Eternity, from Works to Rewards; a Reward suitable to the Work we have here been doing, whether it be Good or Evil: And is not this a great Change? Take a few Hints in particular about it to shew the Greatness of it.

First, It is such a Change as all other Changes upon the outward Man are but leading and introductory unto, and into which at last they all issue and resolve themselves. We pass through many Changes here in this World. We may say as *Job, Changes and War are upon us*; but these are but leading and preliminary,

as it were, to this last and great Change ; these all are, or should be, to us Monitors of this last Change, and do but a little darkly shadow it out unto us.

Secondly, It is such a Change as calls for great Spiritual Changes to pass upon us here, to fit and prepare us for it ; a Change in our Minds, a Change in our Wills, a Change in our Affections, a Change in our Conversation, a Change in our whole Man ; a real Change, a thorough Change, an universal Change ; *Old Things must be done away, and all Things must become New*, 2 Corinth. 5. 17. The Mind must be changed from Darkness to Light, from Ignorance to Knowledge in Spiritual Things : The Will must be changed from Enmity to Subjection, from Rebellion to Obedience to God and his Laws ; the Affections must be changed from Earthliness to Heavenliness, from Carnality to Spirituality ; the Conversation must be changed from Sin to Holiness : from Vanity and Loosness to Strictness and Seriousness in Walking with God. O how great must that Change be that calls for so many and so great Changes to fit and prepare us for it !

Thirdly, It is such a Change, as though it do not put us out of Being, yet it puts us into a quite other manner of Being than ever we yet had ; a Change which sets us naked before the Tribunal of God, to receive a Definitive Sentence of Life or Death from him ; a Change which brings us into the immediate Sight of God, either as a gracious Father, or as a Re-
venging

venging Judge ; a Change which fully opens the Eyes of the Soul, and makes him to see both Grace and Sin, Heaven and Hell ; Grace in its Ableness, Sin in its Odiousness, Heaven in its Glory, and Hell in its Horror ; for (my Beloved) whatever we are, whether Good or Bad, Saints or Sinners, yet when we die, our Eyes will be fully opened to see these Things ; we shall see unutterable Things ; if we be good, we shall see them with Joy and Exultation, if we be bad, we shall see them with Anguish and Confusion of Soul.

Fourthly, It is such a Change as makes us capable of, and actually puts us into unspeakable greater Things, either of Happiness or Misery, Comfort or Confusion, than ever here we knew, or were capable of ; a Change, which in one Moment, in the Twinkling of an Eye, carries the Soul from small First fruits to the full Vintage ; from a few Drops to a Bottomless, Boundless Ocean, of either Happiness or Vengeance, Delight or Torment ; and withal there leaves him without any Possibility of Change or Alteration for ever, but that of its Re-union with the Body ; for it's such a Change as leaves the State of the Soul for ever unchangeable. O then think much and often with your selves how great a Change Death will make with you ! Certainly did Men think and consider with themselves how great a Change Death will make with them when it comes, they would not leave the Matters of their Souls in such Disorder and Discomposure, in such an unready Posture for it as they do.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Would you indeed set all right in your Souls, and make all ready for a Dying Hour? Then presently set upon Soul-work, without admitting of the least Delay or Procrastination upon any Account whatsoever: Delays and Procrastinations in the Work of our Souls and Eternity is the Highway to Death and Ruin. What was it that ruined the foolish Virgins but their Delays in this great Work, and their Neglect of the great Concerns of their Souls, till it was too late to mind them! *Mat. 25. begin.* *Felix* also was in a fair Way, and had a fair Opportunity before him, to have provided for another World; but he delayed, and his Delay (for ought we know) was his Ruin, *Acts 22. 25.* Truly the Heart is very apt to Delay and Procrastinate Soul-work: It is apt to cry out, To morrow, to Morrow. Hence it is that the Scripture calls so often upon us for speedy engaging in the Work of our Souls; the Scripture saith, *Now, and to Day, now is the Accepted Time, now is the Day of Salvation, 2 Cor. 6. 2.* And to Day if you will hear his Voice barden not your Hearts, *Heb. 3. 7, 8.* And if the Scripture saith, *Now,* why shouldst thou talk of hereafter? If the Scripture saith to Day, why shouldst thou talk of to Morrow? *Austin* confesseth this, and withal tells us, there is scarce any end of Delays if once we give Way to them: *I delayed* (saith he) *to be converted to God, and put off my Living to him from Day to Day.* And elsewhere he tells us, that when God called upon him to awake to his Work he returned nothing but a few

few sleepy Words; *Anon, Lord, (saith he) Anon; bear with me a little: But this Anon and Anon had no end; and this bear with me a little went on a long Way.* Take heed of this, this hath been the Ruin of Thousands, and Ten Thousands: How many have been convinced that it is their Duty and Interest both to fall in with the Work of God and their Souls to make Preparation for another World? But they have put it off till hereafter, and satisfied their Consciences with Resolutions hereafter to do so and so, and have thus lost their Season: Oh fall presently without delay upon Soul-work! And to quicken you a little hereunto consider Four Things.

First, Consider the Unreasonableness of Delays. No just Plea can be made, nor true Account given, why you should delay your Soul-work one Moment. The Devil and a Man's own Heart will make many Pleas, but no just Plea can be made: They will tell you it is too soon; you are young, and have time enough before you, what need you engage so soon? But is this a rational Plea? Is it too soon to be saved, too soon to be Happy, too soon to secure your Eternal Interest? Is it too soon to lay hold on Eternal Life? Is it too soon to Know and Enjoy God? Is it too soon to be out of danger of Perishing eternally? Why truly it cannot be too soon for these Things: Besides, God calls for thy Youth; *Remember thy Creator, in the Days of thy Youth, Eccles. 12. 1.* And he greatly values the Kindness of thy Youth, *Jer. 2. 2.* Again, they will suggest that such and such

such a Business must be dispatched, such a Work done and carried off your Hands, and then you may attend this Work : *Lord : (saith he to Christ,) I will follow thee ; but suffer me first to go and bury my Father.* And said another, *Lord, I will follow thee ; but first let me go and bid them farewell which are at Home,* Luke 9. 57. 61. But, Friends, let me ask you, if there be any Business to be dispatch'd like the Business of your Souls and Eternity ? Is there any Thing upon your Hands that is of so much Worth as your Souls, and of so much Weight as Eternity ? Is there any Thing you are so nearly concern'd to mind as that which is indeed the one Thing necessary, even the saving of our Souls ? Oh ! The whole World is nothing to this, and the greatest Concernments on Earth are but Trifles to this Concern. Again, they will tell you it is an inconvenient Season, and hereafter the Work may be better done and minded by you than now it can ; which was *Felix's* Case in the Place before-mentioned, *Acts 24. 25.* But hearken, Soul, art thou sure of another Season ? And art thou sure that that will be a more Convenient Season ? Surely no : If it be not convenient to Day, thou may'st fear it will be less convenient to Morrow : that Devil and Deceitful Heart that tells thee it is not convenient now, will make Provision that it shall be less convenient hereafter. O therefore break through all these Pleas, and fall speedily upon Soul-work.

Secondly, Consider the Danger of Delays : Delays in this Case are exceeding dangerous ;
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80 *The Great Concern: Or,*

one Day's, yea, (for any Thing I know) one Hour's delay herein may prove thine Eternal Undoing! It may prove the Loss of Christ, the Loss of Heaven, and the Loss of thy Soul, and all for ever. Alas! Art thou sure thou shalt live one Day, one Hour more in this World? For ought thou knowest the next Moment thou goest down to the Grave, *Job 21. 13.* But in Case thou shouldst live longer in the World, art thou sure the Gospel, and the Means of Grace shall be continued to thee? If thou shouldst not be taken from the World, yet the Gospel may be taken from thee; though the Day of thy Life may last a while longer, yet the Day of Gospel-Grace and Mercy may suddenly expire; and if that be once gone, all the Tenders of Christ, all the Offers of Grace, all the Exhibitions of Life and Salvation, are gone, if the Gospel be once gone, thy Season is gone, and thy Soul is gone, and thy Salvation is gone, and that for ever; therefore, saith the Apostle, *Now is the Accepted Time*; speaking of the Day of Gospel-Mercy, *Now is the Day of Salvation*, *2 Cor. 9. 2.* Or grant thou shouldst live, and the Gospel should be continued to thee, as to the outward Means, yet art thou sure that the Day and Season of Grace will last any longer than this present Moment? Remember that sad Word which the Lord breathed out with Tears in his Eyes over Neglecting Jerusalem, *Luke 19. 43.* *O that thou hadst known, at least in this thy Day, the Things that belong to thy Peace! But now they are hid from thine Eyes.* Alas! How soon may God withdraw

withdraw his Spirit from thee? How soon may he call home his grieved Spirit from thy neglecting, resisting Soul, once for all, saying, my Spirit shall strive no more with that Man? *Gen. 6. 3.* How soon may God Seal thee up under Judicial Blindness and Hardness of Heart, so that thou shalt never be able to believe or to do any Thing for the Good of thy Soul in order for another World? Thou talkest of to Morrow, and Hereafter, but who knows but that before to Morrow God may clap the Seal of an hard Heart and a blind Mind upon thee? So as that tho' thou shouldst live a Thousand Years, and withal enjoy the fairest Means that ever any Soul enjoyed, yet thou shouldst be never able to Believe or Repent, to do any Thing for the working out of thy Salvation. It is oftentimes his Way of Proceeding with neglecting, delaying ones, *Isa. 6. 10. Job 11. 39, 40.* Oh how soon may the Oath of God go forth against thee? Thou talkest of to Morrow; but alas! Who knows but that before to Morrow God may swear in his Wrath, thou shalt not enter into his Rest? It is what is threatned against such as will not hear his Voice to Day, but harden their Hearts against him, *Heb. 3. 7, 8, 9, 10, 11.* There is a time when God's Oath goes forth against Souls, and such and such Sinners, for their Contempt and Neglect of Christ and Grace; a Time not only when God saith, but sweareth, and that in Wrath, that they should never enter into his Rest: And if once God's Oath is gone out against a Man, that Man is past Recovery;

covery; then farewell *Christ*, and Heaven, and Soul, and All, for ever. O how dangerous are delays ! Therefore take heed of them, and fall presently upon Soul-work

Thirdly, Consider the Disadvantage of Delays: Delays herein are disadvantageous as well as dangerous. Indeed, were there no Danger in them, (I mean as to the Eternal State) yet the Disadvantage of them is so great, as if rightly considered, might be enough to Antidote the Soul against them, and engage it presently in the Work which relates to another World. Pray consider it a little; by delays the Soul loseth much Sweet Communion with *Christ*, and many a Blessed Communication of Love from him, which he might enjoy. The sooner we fall upon the Work of Heaven and Eternity, the sooner we come to a Taste and Beginning of Heaven, and a Blessed Eternity in our Souls: O the Sweet Embraces, the Blessed Discoveries, the Glorious Incomes of Love and Delight, that the Soul loses by his delays to get into *Christ*, and to walk with *God*, and to mind Eternal Concernments ! Poor Soul, by thy delays thou hast lived upon Husks and Swill all thy Days hitherto; whereas thou mightest have eaten Bread in thy Father's House, and drunk Wine new in thy Father's Kingdom: Thou hast lived on the muddy, dungy, drossie, Delights of Sin and the Creature, whereas thou mightest have solaced and delighted thy Soul with those Christal Streams of undefiled Pleasures, which are at *Christ's* and his Father's Right Hand. Besides by delays

ays, the Work of thy Soul grows more difficult; hereby Corruption grows more strong, and the Heart grows more hard; by every Day's delay the old Enmity strengthens itself, and the Soul is more and more settled upon its Lees. For Accustomedness in Sinning hardens the Heart in Sin, as is hinted *Jer. 13. 23.* Every Day the Soul is more alienated from Christ, and hardened against him. At best, if thy Soul doth at last come to see its need of Christ, and desire to close with him, and to mind the Work and Concerns of another World, yet the longer thou delayest this Business, the greater Temptations thou wilt have to get over: For though now my Heart saith it is too soon, yet after a few Days delay, it will say it is too late; it will be apt to conclude that now thy Day is over, and now Christ will have nothing to do with thee: O why shouldst thou be such an Enemy to thy own Soul as to run it upon these Disadvantages? Rather avoid them by falling presently upon Soul-Work.

Fourthly, Consider the Sinfulness of delays, and the Horrible Guilt they bring upon the Soul: As delays are dangerous and disadvantageous, so they are sinful too, exceeding sinful and provoking to the God of Heaven. The Truth is, were there no danger in them, no disadvantage in them to the Soul, yet the Sinfulness of them is such as should make us afraid of them: In every Days delay to mind and pursue Soul-work, there is positive Rebellion and Disobedience to the Will and Command

mand of God : For the Command is, *To Day if you will hear his Voice barden not your Hearts,* Heb. 3. 7, 8. By delaying therefore thou rebellest against the Commandment. In every Days delay to mind and pursue Soul-work there is horrible Unkindness and Ingratitude to God and Christ ; which surely is a Black Sin, and brings great Guilt upon the Soul. God spares you Time after Time, when he might cast you off the next Moment. And this he doth that you may pursue the Work of your Souls and Eternity ; and O what Unkindness, what Ingratitude, must it be in us to neglect and put off this Work ? In every delay to mind and pursue Soul-work there is much Contempt of Christ and Grace ; and this is that which makes it be exceeding sinful : Christ offers himself and his Grace to you ; he offers you Life, he offers you Peace, he offers you Pardon, he offers you Righteousness, he offers you Strength, he offers you all the Treasures of Heaven, and withal calls upon you to accept these Offers, and to take home these Things to your selves, but you by your Delays pour Contempt upon all ; you in Effect say, neither Christ, nor his Grace, nor the Purchase of his Blood, are worth minding, worth looking after. O what Contempt is this ? And what Sin is this ? By Delays you do in effect say, there is something better than Christ, and something of greater Concernment to you than Salvation by Christ ; you plainly say that indeed you will have Christ hereafter, and Salvation hereafter ; but for the present you had
much

much rather have your Lusts and Worldly Pleasures. O tremble at the Thoughts of this, and let it affright you out of your Delays, and put you immediately upon Soul-work ! In a Word, never any pretended that they minded the Concerns of their Soul, Union with Christ, Walking with God, making Sure their Calling and Election too soon ; many have repented that they have minded these Things so late. I remember a bitter Complaint of *Austin* in his Book of Confessions, *I have loved thee too late*, saith he, *O thou so Ancient, and yet so New, a Beauty, I have loved thee too late*. He bewails that he had so long laid out his Love upon the Creature, and not given Christ his Love. Could you ask all the Saints in Heaven whether ever they repented that they minded the Work of Christ and their Souls too soon ? They would tell you, no, they repented of nothing but that they minded it so late. Once more therefore let me call upon you to fall immediately upon Soul-work, and never rest till thy Heart cries out to God as *Austin* did, when God had really shew'd him himself, and made him sensible of his Sins, *When God, saith he, had shew'd me my Sins and Misery, there arose a great Storm within me, which carried with it a great Shower of Tears ; and indeed I let loose the Reins of Tears, crying out to God in such Words as these, O Lord, how long, how long wilt thou be angry ? How long shall it be said, to Morrow, and to Morrow ? Wherefore may it not be now ? Why may there not an End be put to my Sin and Filthiness this*
very

very Hour ? And indeed God made that *very Season* the Season of his Conversion : So labour to see thy Sin and Misery so far as thou mayest cry out with a Holy Restlessness to God, How long shall it be to Morrow, and to Morrow ? Why may it not be turned to thee now ? Why may not my Soul be engaged in the Work of Heaven and Eternity now ?

Fifthly, Would you indeed set all right in your Souls, and make all ready for a Dying Hour ? Then be much and importunate with God in Prayer, to teach you so to number your Days as to apply your Heart to Wisdom : This I ground upon *Psalms 90. 12* where *Moses*, the Man of God, is found in this Practice ; *Lord, (saith he,) teach us to number our Days, that we may apply our Hearts unto Wisdom. To number our Days, is not to number them in an Arithmetical, but a Spiritual Way ; it is not to cast up how many Days the Life of Man consists of, that is easily done, but it is spiritually and practically to consider, and lay to heart, the Shortness and Uncertainty of our Lives together with the various Miseries and Calamities that do attend them. So Mollerus. It is seriously and fiducially to contemplate the Vanity of Life as short and uncertain, and as attended with Sorrows, Miseries and innumerable Troubles, and to apply thy Heart to Wisdom, 'Tis to make Religion, and the Work of a Man's Soul, his main Business ; it is to make it his great Business, and endeavour to get an Interest in God and Christ, in the Covenant of Grace and Eternal Life ; and in*

time to provide for, and make sure of a Blessed Eternity; it is to set a Man's whole Soul to the Work of God, and his own Salvation. Now, as ever you would indeed make ready for a Dying Hour, beg of God to teach you thus to number your Days, and thus to apply your Hearts to Wisdom. There are Two Things I would observe, and so close this.

First, That such a numbring of our Days is what the best of Saints need, and may make great use of. *Moses* was a very Holy Man, and he looked upon it as a Work Useful, and of great Importance to him to contemplate the Vanity of Life, and to think of the Shortness and Uncertainty of his Abode here; the most Holy Souls need this; the most Holy Souls need humbling; they need weaning from this World, they need quickening unto Duty, they need to have their Hearts awakened, to mind Heaven and a future Life; and the right numbring of our Days is that which greatly conduceth thereunto.

Secondly, Observe, that as this is a Work needful and useful for the best of Saints to be employed in, so it is a Work above their own Strength, and that which they need Divine Assistance to enable them unto. *Moses* was an eminently Holy Man, and yet as he saw he had need of this, so he saw it was a Work above his Power; and therefore he goes to God, and puts in himself among the rest, and prays for his teaching herein. Let us do likewise; let us lye much at the Foot of God for his Teachings,

ings, whereby we may be enabled so to number our Days as thus to apply our Hearts unto Wisdom; beg him to make us see the Vanity and Uncertainty of our Lives, and that so as effectually to engage us to make out after a better Life.

C H A P. VIII.

Wherein more particular Helps and Directions are laid down in order to the setting of Things right, and making all ready for a Dying Hour.

BUT I would come nearer this great Business, and give you some more particular Directions, in order to your making all ready for a Dying Hour. And,

First, Would you indeed have all Things right in the Matters of your Souls for a Dying Hour? Then get into Christ, get Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ, by believing Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ, is most requisite and necessary to fit and prepare us for a Dying Hour; and without we have it we can have nothing set right, nothing in order, nothing in readiness, for that Hour. You know how the Scripture speaks *He that hath the Son hath Life, but he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life,* 1 John 5. 12. *And there is no Condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus,* Rom. 8. 1. O my Beloved we shall Live or Die, be Saved or Damned for

ever according as we do, or do not, get an Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ. This is that which lyes at the Bottom and Foundation of all, of all our Hopes and of all our Mercies, or all our Comforts, of all our Acceptation and Communion with God, of all Grace on Earth, and all Glory in Heaven; and without it, whatsoever our Attainments in Religion are, whatever our Profession may be, whatever Place or Esteem we may have in the Church of God, though never so Raised and Eminent, yet we have not any Thing that will avail us in a Dying Hour. I remember a Saying of a Learned Man, *That thou mayest live in Death, saith he, get into Christ, implant thy self into Christ by believing. Faith joyns and unites us to Christ, and they that are in Christ cannot die, for Christ is their Life.* And indeed, if we can have Union with Christ, he will be Life in Death it self to us; *Blessed are the Dead which die in the Lord*; that is, die having Union with Christ, being implanted into Christ, *Rev. 14. 13*. If we have Union with Christ, he will not only be Life in Death to us, but he will even turn Death it self into Life, the King of Terrors into a King of Comforts; insomuch that the Soul shall be able to triumph over it, as the Apostle doth, *1 Cor. 15. 55, 56, 57*. Whereas without this, without Union with Christ, an Interest in Christ, we shall never be able to look Death in the Face with Comfort, but shall, when we come to die, be some of the Misera- blest Spectacles in the World. It is the Speech

of a Worthy Divine, who is so long since gone hence, *A Christless Dying Man or Woman* (saith he) *is one of the Saddest Spectacles in the World*: For a Man to be Dying, and not Christless, that is comfortable; for such an one dies but to live for ever; he dies the Death of Nature, to live the Life of Glory: For a Man to be Christless, and not Dying, is something tolerable; for who knows but that the next Meeting at an Ordinance may be the Time of God's Love to him, of drawing him into Christ? But for a Man to be Dying and Christless; Christless and Dying too, that is intolerable, that is terrible indeed; for such an one dies to be damned, and he is going off from all Hopes and Possibilities of Mercy for ever: Oh therefore above all press after Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ! This was *Paul's* great Care and Solitude to the very last, that so he might go off the Stage with Comfort; and that for which he accounted all Things but Dung, as most base and vile, *Phil. 3. 8, 9.* O Soul, didst thou indeed know and consider of how much Weight and Importance an Interest in Christ is to thee, with reference to thine Eternal Happiness, thou wouldst cry out as eagerly for Christ, as *Rachel* did for her Children, saying, Give me Christ or else I die, give me Union with Christ, and an Interest in Christ, or I am undone eternally. O look to the great Uniting Act of Faith; make a right Choice of Christ; chuse him as your Lord and Head, your King and Saviour, and renew your Choice of him

every Day resigning up your selves entirely to him, to be saved and governed by him in his own Way.

Secondly, Would you indeed have all set right and made ready in the Matters of your Souls for a Dying Hour? Then press after a firm and unshaken Assurance of an Interest in God, and his Love, and of your Right and Title to Eternal Life, of another and better Life than this here. Without some good Evidence from Heaven, and some well-grounded Assurance of an Interest in God and Eternal Life, Things are not ready with us, nor are we in such a Preparedness for a Dying Hour, as we ought to be. Though a Man have an Interest in God and his Love; though he hath a Right and Title to Eternal Life and Happiness, yet as long as he is in the Dark, and at an Uncertainty in his own Soul about it, Things are out of order with him, and he is greatly unready for a Dying Hour: For pray mark, as our Interest in this is requisite to our dying happily, so the Sight and Assurance of that Interest is requisite to our dying comfortably: Indeed, when a Man hath attained to some good Evidence for Heaven, to some well-grounded Assurance of his Interest in God and Christ, then are Things in a good Posture with him in reference to a Dying Hour; then he can play with Death, and triumph over it as Job did, when he could say, *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, Job 19. 25, 26. And as the Apostle seems to speak of it, 2 Cor. 5. 12. *We know that when our Earthly House of this Tabernacle*

bernacle shall be dissolved, we have a Building of God, an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens: For this we groan earnestly, desiring to be cloathed upon with our House, which is from Heaven. None of you do comfortably leave your House unless you have another to go unto; much less can you comfortably quit this World, unless you have some well-grounded Assurance of another and a better Life. Take a Man that is in the Dark, and at a Loss, as to his Interest in God and Christ, and he knows not what Death will do to him, nor where it will lodge him, whether in Heaven or Hell, whether upon the Throne of Glory, or in the Prison of Eternal Darkness; in the Bosom of Christ's Love, or under the Revelation of his Infinite and Eternal Wrath: and is such an one ready for a Dying Hour? Surely no. As ever therefore you would have Things right and ready within indeed for a Dying Hour, you must press after an Assurance of your Interest in God and Christ; you must do as the Apostle exhorts, Give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. You must every Day press after a fuller and firmer Assurance, as to your Eternal Interest; you must be much in Faith, much in Prayer, much in examining your Evidences, much in proving your State, much in looking after the Seal and Evidences of the Blessed Spirit; which is indeed all in all: And never rest till you can say, My Lord, and my God, my Heaven, my Glory; God is the Rock of my Heart, and my Portion

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for ever. O then all will be sweet and well with you. This is that which the Saints of Old have laboured after with their whole Might. Say unto my Soul (saith David to God) I am thy Salvation, Psal. 35. 3. Set me as a Seal upon thy Heart, and a Signet upon thine Arm, Cant. 8. 6. This Austin presseth much after: Lord, saith he, tell me what thou art to me. Say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation: So say it, that I may hear it: Behold, the Ears of my Heart are before thee; open them, O Lord and say unto my Soul, I am thy Salvation. O my Beloved, this is worth pressing after, for this is the welcomest News a poor Soul can possibly hear, to be told that God is his, and Heaven is his, and Eternal Life is his: And when once this News is come, then welcome Life, and welcome Death: Welcome Time, and welcome Eternity: Then the Soul can say, O Sweet Eternity! O Blessed Eternity! O Sirs, be not satisfied without some good Assurance of God's Love to your Souls, and your Right and Title to Heaven and Eternal Life! Yea, without the fullest Assurance that is attainable here; for know, that there are Degrees in Assurance it self. The Scripture mentions Three Degrees of Assurance, First, There is Assurance. The Work of Righteousness is Peace, and the Fruit of Righteousness is Assurance for ever, Isa. 31. 17. And, Give all Diligence to make your Calling and Election sure, as in the Place before-quoted. Secondly, There is much Assurance, Our Gospel came unto you, not in Word only, but in Power, and in the De-

monstration of the Spirit, and much Assurance,
1 Thess. 1. 5.

Thirdly, There is a full Assurance, *We desire that every one of you do show the same Diligence to the full Assurance of Hope unto the End, Heb. 6. 11.* Now, my Beloved, I would not have you satisfied without Assurance, without much Assurance, yea, without a full Assurance; the more full your Assurance is, the more Cheerfully, Joyfully, and Triumphantly, will you die.

Thirdly, Would you indeed have all right, all in order in the Matter of your Souls for a Dying Hour? Then labour to maintain a constant actual Peace with God? every Day making even with him, and renewing the Sense of his pardoning Love in your Souls, as a firm Union with Christ, and a well grounded Assurance of an Interest in God, and Eternal Life; so also an actual Peace with God, and a daily renewed Pardon from him, is requisite to a thorough Readiness and Preparedness for a Dying Hour. *David* had an Interest in God; yea, and his Interest was clear to him; yet how sollicitous was he to get all even before God and him? And how uncomfortable was it with him till he had renewed his Peace with God, when by his Fall it had been broken? *Psalms 51. 8, 12.* This also is what is evidently held forth, *Job 7. 21.* where *Job* pleads thus with God, *Why dost thou not pardon mine Iniquity, and take away my Transgression? For now shall I sleep in the Dust; thou shalt seek me in the Morning, but I shall*

not be. In the Verse before he acknowledgeth he had sinned, and here he intimates that God frowned on him for his Sin; the Sense of Pardoning Love was not renewed in his Soul, which here therefore he pleads for, and that upon this Account, because he was speedily to die; intimating he could not die with comfort till he had a renewed Sense of God's Pardoning Love. And this is the very Thing which *David* begs in the *Psalm* of my Text, in order to his comfortable going hence, (v. 2.) *That God would take away his Transgressions*, *Psalm* 39. 8. As long as there is any Sin, any Guilt, lying upon our Consciences, any Sin unpardoned, any Difference between God and us, any Frowns in his Face towards us, we are unready for Death, and cannot with that Comfort and Boldness of Spirit welcome it as we ought: But when our Peace with God is maintained, and we have a renewed Sense of his Pardoning Love in our Souls, then are Things right and in order with us indeed, and we may think of Death with Boldness and Comfort; and therefore mind this, as ever you would be found ready for a Dying Hour; every Day even Things between God and you; every Day get a fresh Sense of Pardon from him.

First, as near as possible may be, do nothing that may occasion any Breach between God and you, or raise any Frowns in his Face towards you: If you do not break with God, he will not break with you: All Breaches, as to Peace and Friendship between God and

us, begin on our Part; yea, neither will God break with us for little Things, in case they be not allowed by us, but watched and striven against; therefore as near as possibly you can, do nothing to break and interrupt your Peace with God for one Moment. And because when you have done all, many Things may and will fall out (we having sinful, sinning Hearts, and living in a World of Snares and Temptations) for which God may justly frown upon us, let us,

Secondly, Every Day make even with him. In the close of every Day let us consider wherein we have broken with God, come short of Duty, given any Grief and Distaste to his Holy Spirit, and by Faith and Prayer let us sue out the Pardon of it; and let us not lye down, if possible, without some Intimation of his Pardoning Love. For which end,

First, We should act Faith on the Blood and Advocateship of Jesus Christ, *Whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his Righteousness for Remission of Sins*, Rom. 3. 24. 25. And indeed Christ hath set up a standing Office in Heaven, which we may call the Pardon-Office; he procureth new Pardons for his People daily under their new Sins; *We have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, and he is the Propitiation for our Sins*, 1 John 2. 1, 2. Have daily Recourse to the Blood of Christ; truly without it there's no living; the Best, the Holiest, on Earth have

have daily need of his Blood, and should have daily recourse unto it, for the maintaining of their Peace, and for the renewing of God's Pardoning Love in their Souls.

Secondly, We should be humbly and earnestly importunate with God in Prayer, resolving not to let him go without his Blessing, carrying upon our Spirits the Sense of the Worth, and also of our Unworthiness of it. Thus the Holy Men of God of Old have done: They have sued out the Pardon of their Sins by Faith and Prayer, and gotten a fresh Sense of God's Love, when they have broken with him; as I might instance in *Job*, in *David*, and others. We should every Day Pray, as that Father did, *O Lord, saith he, do not after the manner of a Judge, weigh or consider what I have done, what I have spoken, what I have thought, but blot out all my Sins with thy own Blood,* And as another of them did: *Lord, saith he, there is that in me which may offend thy Holy Eyes. I know and confess it: But who shall cleanse me! Or to whom shall I fly for Relief but to thee? O hide not thy Face from me.* Truly when we have walked most Watchfully, most Circumspectly, many Things may and will fall out that may offend the pure Eyes of God's Glory, which we should confess and bewail before him, suing out the Pardon of them by the Blood of his Son. Some of the Saints have made this their daily Practice, and so have maintained their Peace for many Years together? And when they have come to die have

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gloriously triumphed over Death, and have gone off the Stage with much Comfort; and so should we.

Fourthly, Would you indeed have all right, all in order, in your Souls for a Dying Hour? Then be true and faithful to your own Consciences, that you may have them for you, and not against you, both while you Live, and when you Die. Conscience (my Beloved) is Christ's Deputy or Vicergerent in the Soul; it is both a Judge and a Witness for God within us; it either Accuses or Excuses, Acquits or Condemns, *Rom. 2. 15.* And according as Conscience is either for us, or against us, so we are either ready, or not ready, prepared, or not prepared for Death and Judgment: If we have the Witness and Judgment of our Consciences for us, then have we Boldness and Comfort both in Life and Death; then we can welcome Death's Approach to us; but if the Witness and Judgment of Conscience be against us, then Death cannot but be terrible to us: *This is our rejoicing.* (saith the Apostle) *the Testimony of our Consciences, that in Simplicity and Godly Sincerity, not in Fleshly Wisdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Conversation in the World,* 2 Cor. 1. 12. And again, *If our Hearts condemn us, God is greater than our Hearts, and knoweth all Things; but if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God,* 1 John 3. 21. Oh my Beloved, as a Peace with God, so a Sound and Holy Peace with a Man's own Conscience, (that is to say, to have the

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Witness and Judgment of a Man's own Conscience for him, and not against him) is highly requisite for a right Disposing and Preparing of us for a Dying Hour. As ever therefore you would have all ready and in order against such an Hour, mind this, and look after this; be sure you carry it so to your own Consciences, as that you may have them always for you, and not against you, while you live; and for you, and not against you, when you come to die. In order to which mind these Two Things:

First, Labour to get your Consciences well enlightened and informed, and be much with God in Prayer; in order thereto beg and implore God for a true and faithful Conscience; a Conscience that will bear a true and faithful Witness in your Souls, and that will pass a right Judgment upon Things, both upon your State and Actions. In *Heb. 10. 21.* we read of a True Heart, or a True Conscience, that is, a Conscience rightly informed, a Conscience that bears a True and Faithful Witness, and that passeth a True and Faithful Judgment upon things. Such a Conscience should we beg of God, and labour by all Means possible to attain unto. O my Beloved! It is a dangerous Thing to have an Erroneous Conscience, a Mistaken Conscience, a Conscience not rightly Informed: For pray mark, this is what leaves a Man under a Necessity of Sinning, and so of Grieving the Spirit of God on the one Hand, and it endangereth his Peace and Comfort on the other Hand; for having
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an Erroneous Conscience, whether we obey it or obey it not, we sin; if we obey it we sin, because Conscience commands what is not agreeable to the Word of God; if we obey it not, we sin, because we rebel against the Light and Dictates of Conscience, omitting that which Conscience tells us is a Duty, though it be not a Duty; or do that which Conscience tells us is a Sin, though it be not a Sin; labour therefore to get your Consciences well informed and enlightened.

Secondly, Be sure you do nothing against the Light and Dictates of Conscience, being rightly informed, but obey it in all Things. In *Job* 24. 13. we read of some that *Rebel against the Light*; that is, that do sin against their own Consciences; which is a double Sin, a Sin clothed with great Aggravations, and greatly discomposeth us for a Dying Hour: But we must take heed of this, and listen to the Voice of Conscience; Conscience regulated by the Word of God: God speaks to us by our Consciences; he speaks to us through his Word by our Consciences, and he speaks to us through his Providence by our Consciences, and we should take heed of violating the Dictates, or speaking of Conscience in the least. Doth not Conscience many times tell us such and such Ways which we walk in are not Good, and must be turned from, or we are undone for ever? And now we should be True and Faithful to our own Conscience, and speedily turn from those Ways; we should have nothing to do with

with any Thing that Conscience condemns us in, or for. Again, doth not Conscience many times tell you, that such and such Duties are totally neglected, or else seldom or slightly performed by you, which yet you ought to be conversant and diligent in the Performance of? Now you should herein also be Faithful and True to your own Consciences, living up to the Constant, Diligent, Spiritual, Performance of those Duties. Again, doth not Conscience many times tell you that Things are not right with you? That it is an Evil Frame of Spirit you live in? That you are too Carnal, too Light, too Vain, too Frothy, too Eager, in your Pursuits of this World, and too Remiss in your Pursuits of Heaven and Eternity? Now as ever you would be ready for a Dying Hour, you should be Faithful to your own Conscience, setting that right which is amiss, and hasting out of that Evil Frame into the contrary Gracious Frame. (O my Beloved) if you be True and Faithful to Conscience, Conscience will be True and Faithful to you, Witnessing for you, and not against you, both while you live, and when you die. In a Word, in all things labour to keep a Good Conscience: This was Paul's great Care and Exercise, Acts 24. 16. *Herein do I exercise my self, to have always a Conscience void of Offence towards God, and towards Man.* O this will be a Sweet and Blessed Exercise! And the more we are found in it while we live, the more Comfort will it afford us when we come to die;

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Would you indeed have all Things right and in order in the Matters of your Souls when a Dying Hour comes? Then labour for much Purity of Heart and Life, and by no means admit of any Sin, any Corruption whatsoever; the more Pure and Holy we are, the more ready we are, and in the better Posture Things are with us for a Dying Hour: *Without Holiness* (saith the Apostle) *no Man shall see God*, Heb. 12. 14. Holiness is necessary unto Happiness, Holiness is the Way unto Happiness, Holiness is what fits and prepares us for Happiness, and brings us unto Happiness; yea, Holiness is a Part of our Happiness; a great Part of the Happiness of Heaven itself lyes in Holiness; accordingly, the more Holy we are, the more we are suited to, and prepared for the future Happiness, and so for Death and Judgment: For that which prepares us for the future Happiness, that also prepares us for Death, which is but an Inlet into that Happiness for ever. Therefore if you would have all Things right, all Things ready, indeed for a Dying Hour, then labour for the exactest Purity and Holiness that possibly you can: This is that which the Apostle aims at, and prays for, on the Behalf of the *Thessalonians*, as most conducing to the preparing of them for their latter End, 1 *Thess* 3. 12, 13. *And the Lord make you to abound and increase in Love one towards another, and towards all Men, even as we do towards you, to the End we may establish your Hearts unblameable in Holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of*

of the Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints. The Posture he would have them to be in at the Coming of Christ is the Posture of unblameable Holiness, which indeed is the best and readiest Posture. The same Things he prays for in order to the same End in 1 Thess 5. 33. *And the very God of Peace sanctifie you wholly; and I pray God that your whole Spirit, Soul and Body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* This is, that also which that other Apostle enjoins in order hereunto, 2 Pet. 3. 14. *Be diligent, that ye may be found of him in Peace, without Spot, and Blameless.* The more Spotless and Blameless we are in our Spirits and Ways, the more ready we are for Death and Judgment. Oh press after an Eminency in Holiness, admitting of none, no, not the least Taint or Tincture of Sin, or Sinful Defilement, upon any Terms whatsoever! Unholy Souls are unready Souls; they are unready for Death, unready for Judgment, unready for the future Life: And for Men to talk of being ready for these, and yet be unholy, is the greatest Folly in the World; therefore Labour for much Purity and Holiness.

First, Labour for much Purity and Holiness in your Lives and Walkings: This is what God indispensably calls for, 1 Pet. 1. 15, 16. *As he that has called you is Holy, so be ye Holy in all manner of Conversation: Because it is written, Be ye Holy, for I am Holy.* We should press after Universal Holiness. There should be a Vein and a Tincture of Holiness run through all we

we do, even our Civil as well as our Religious Actions, we should, as near as possible, be Dedicated and Devoted to God, and our Lives should be Lives of Walking with him: They, and they only, who walk with God while they live, are those who will be found ready to live with God when they come to die. As for all Careless, Licentious ones, let them never talk of being ready for Death, and future Life, for they are at an utter Distance from any such Thing: Indeed, ready they are, but for what? Ready for Hell, ready for the Wrath of God, ready for Destruction, but they are not at all ready for a Blessed Eternity. The Apostle weeps over such, as being indeed thus ready, *Phil. 2. 18, 19. Many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you, even weeping, that they are Enemies to the Cross of Christ; whose End is Destruction, whose God is their Belly, whose Glory is their Shame, who mind Earthly Things.* Many there are who profess and hope well of themselves, as to another Life, who are yet loose and carnal, wicked and licentious, in their Lives and Walkings: They do not watch and keep their Garments, but wallow in the Mire of their Lusts and Pollutions. They stain their Profession with Foul, Gross, and Scandalous Sins; at least, they live, and allow themselves in some secret Way and Haunt of Sinning, indulging this and the other Lust: But (my Beloved) these are far indeed from being ready for a Dying Hour, and must expect to be cast off from God and Christ for ever.

Such

Such were those, *Matth. 7. 22, 23. They came and cried, Lord. Lord: Came with their Gifts, Parts and Privileges; but Christ sent them away with a Depart from me ye Workers of Iniquity.* So in *Jer. 7.* and beginning, we read of some that made Profession of God and his Ways, and yet walked in Sin and wallowed in all manner of Abomination: And what is the Issue? Verse the 13th, saith God, *I will cast you out of my Sight:* God will at last cast off all Loose, Licentious Walkers; *Psal. 21. 9. David prays thus, Gather not my Soul with Sinners.* And truly if you would not be gather'd with Sinners at last, you must not walk in Sin with Sinners now: And as for the Saints themselves, so far as they let down their Watch, and neglect their Walking with God; so far as they give Way to a Loose, Vain, Heedless Way of Living; so far they have Things out of order with them, and they are unready for a Dying Hour. *Beho'd I come as a Thief* (saith Christ) *blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his Garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his Shame,* *Rev. 16. 15.* So far as the Saints carry it unbecoming their High and Holy Profession, (which is too frequent with them) so far they are short of that compleat Readiness for Death and Eternity they should press after.

Secondly, Labour for much Purity and Holiness in your Hearts and Affections. We must be Pure and Holy within as well as without; in our Hearts and Affections, as well as in our Lives and Walkings, if we would

would have all right indeed for a Dying Hour: *Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in his Holy Place?* The Answer is; *He that hath Clean Hands, and a Pure Heart,* Psal. 24. 3. 5. And Christ expressly tells us, *Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God,* Mat 5. 8. Indeed Impure Hearts are unfit to see God: He is a Pure and Holy God; nor may Impure-hearted Ones expect that Blessed Sight. I remember a Saying which I have read in one of the Ancients, (which I look upon to be a great Saying) *Wo and alas! O Lord, (saith he) how preposterous is it? How rash and unadvised? How inordinate? How remote from the Rule of the Word of thy Truth and Wisdom, for a Man to desire to see God with an unclean Heart?* O have a Watchful Eye upon your Hearts; and labour to keep them as free from any Taint and Tincture of Sin as possibly you can.

First, Be sure you suffer no Lust to get up into the Throne, where it is too often found. When Sin is consented to by the Will, the Lust is on the Throne in the Heart; and indeed it is wonderful to think how soon one or another's Corruption will mount up into the Throne in the Soul if we let down our Watch but a little. But Oh take heed of this! So far as any one Lust whatsoever is predominant within us, so far we are marvellously unready for a Dying Hour. And not only so, but,

Secondly, Watch narrowly against the very first Risings and Motions of Sin within, nip

Lust

Lust, if possible, in the very Bud and Blossom. It is true, this calls upon us to have a very curious Eye upon our Hearts; and indeed such an Eye we should have upon them, we must have upon them, if we mean to be Christians indeed. Grace will teach a Man not only to oppose the Acts of Sin, and to watch against the Reign of any Heart-lust, but also to oppose the very first Motions and Risings of Sin in the Soul. And the more you do this, the better Posture you are in for a Dying Hour.

CHAP. IX.

A further Direction in order to a compleat Preparation for Death, to press after the noblest Strains of Grace. Several of these pointed at, and insisted on, as tending hereunto.

Sixthly, **W**ould you indeed have all ready and in order in your Souls for a Dying Hour? Then rest not in low and ordinary, but aspire after the highest and noblest Strains of Grace. The better to understand this, you must know that there are some higher and more noble Strains of Grace than ordinary; Strains of Grace that carry a peculiar Glory and Excellency in them, and do in an eminent manner delight the Heart of God: Indeed, every Strain of Grace, even the least and lowest, has a Beauty and Glory in it, and

and is a Pleasure to God's Heart : The least Dram of Godly Sorrow, the least Holy Awe of God, and Trembling at his Word, the least Breathing of Love and Desire towards him, the least Leaning upon him in a Way of Hope and Dependance, Oh. it has a great Glory in it, and is a Delight to God's Soul ! *The Lord taketh Pleasure in them that fear him, in them that hope in his Mercy.* Psal. 147. 11. But, my Beloved, there are some more Choice and Eminent Strains and AËtings of Grace, that are above the ordinary Rate, and do peculiarly delight the Heart of God, and bring Honour to him ; and the more you come up to these, and live under the Power of these, the more ready Posture you are in for a Dying Hour. Grace is the beginning of Glory : 'Tis (as a worthy Divine expresses it) *The Infancy of Heaven and Glory* ; and the higher it rises in us, the nearer it comes to Glory, and the more it fits us for it. Therefore I say, rest not in low and ordinary, but covet and press after the highest and noblest Strains of Grace ; some of which I shall here set down, and insist a little upon, in order to this great End, of being found under the exactest Readiness for a Dying Hour. The Noble Strains of Grace I would have you come up unto, are these.

1. For a Man to be high, and yet low ; high in Worth and Attainments, but low in Spirit ; low in his own Thoughts and Apprehensions of himself ; to be humble under high and great Acquirements ; this is Noble Grace.

Grace. 'Tis said of *Atbanasius*, "Τῷ ἡλθὲ τοῖς
 ἔργοις, ταπεινὸς δὲ τῷ φρονήματι" ———
 That he *was high in Worth, but low in Spirit*:
 He had great Attainments, but was very hum-
 ble and lowly under all, which is mention'd as
 a peculiar Excellence in him. And I remember
 a Saying which I have read in one of the Anci-
 ents, speaking of Humility, *For a Man to be*
hum'le (says he) *in a low, despicable, abject Con-*
dition, this is no great Matter, but honourable
Humility; that is to say, for a Man to be hum-
 ble in an high and prosperous Condition, to be
 humble under Eminent Employments, *this is a*
great thing, a rare Vertue indeed. O for a Man
 to be high in Attainments, high in Gifts,
 high in Graces, high in Comforts, high in
 Services, high in Successes, high in Place
 and Esteem among Men, and yet at the
 same time to be low in Mind, low in Heart,
 low in his Esteem and Apprehension of
 himself, this is an high and eminent Strain
 of Grace; this *Paul* excelled in, and it was
 his Crown and Glory; he was a Man of as
 high Attainments and Accomplishments as
 most that ever lived; he was high in Gifts,
 high in Graces, high in Comforts, high in
 Services, high in Successes, high in all true
 Worth and Excellency, and yet how low,
 how humble in Spirit was he? How little
 in his own Eye, and how vile in his own
 Esteem? You know how he speaks of him-
 self, *The chief of Sinners*, 1 Tim. 1. 15. *Less*
than the least of all Saints, Ephes. 3. 8. *I am*
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the least of the Apostles: Not worthy to be called an Apostle, 1 Cor. 15. 9. I am nothing, 2 Cor. 12. 11. This also was a Part of Christ's Crown and Glory: Who ever so eminent in Gifts and Graces? Who ever abounded with such Glorious Endowments as he? And yet who so Meek, so Humble, so Lowly, as he? Learn of me, (saith he) for I am meek and lowly in Heart, Matt. 11. 29. In a Verse or Two before he had told us, That all Things were delivered unto him by the Father; and yet here I am meek and lowly in Heart: He was Humble under all his Advancements and Attainments: Oh, labour to be like him herein; whatever your Attainments are, labour to be humble under them, and that because he was so: Blush, O Dust and Ashes! Blush to think of being proud, be ashamed to be proud: God humbles himself, and dost thou exalt thyself? So one speaks; and again elsewhere 'Tis intolerable Impudence, (says he) that when Majesty empties and humbles it self, a vile Worm should swell, and be blown up with Pride. Oh be humble whatever your Attainments are: The more humble you are, the more precious you are in God's Sight; for, He hath respect unto the Lowly, but beholds the Proud afar off, Plal. 138. 6. Yea, he resists the Proud: He sets himself in Battle Array against the Proud, James 4. 6. Arrogate nothing to thy self of those Things that are in thee but thy Sins; by so much the more precious thou art in God's Eyes, by how much the more vile and despicable thou art in thine own Eyes.

ays Bernard. And to say no more, none more ready to die than the Humble and Lowly Person, none more unready than the Proud and High minded.

3. For a Man to be full, and yet empty; full of Enjoyments, and yet empty of the Love of the World; for a Man to enjoy an Affluence of this World's Good, a Fulness of all Creature-Comforts and Contentments, and yet to be dead to all, and sit loose from all, placing his whole Happiness in God and Christ; this is a Choice, a Noble and Excellent Strain of Grace indeed. We read of some, and but of some, in Scripture, who under an Affluence of outward Enjoyments have been weaned from all, and sat loose from all, and have kept up their Communion with God, placing the whole Rest and Happiness of their Souls therein; some such (I say) we read of in Scripture, but truly they are but very few, and indeed 'tis both a rare and a difficult Thing for a Soul thus to do: These Things especially, when enjoyed in the Fullness of them, are so apt to ingross the Heart to themselves, and to alienate it from God, and Communion with God, that 'tis indeed a very rare and difficult Thing for a Man, under an Affluence of them, to sit loose from them, and make God, and Communion with God, all in all to him. 'Tis a great Saying which I have heard of a Learned Man, *Although Adversity breaks many, yet Prosperity and Fulness of Enjoyments kills many more: And how rare a Man*

Man is that who in Prosperity does not, at least a little in some degree or other, let down his Watch, and remit his Strictness and Exactness in walking? David was a Wise Man, and Solomon was a Wiser; and yet both the one and the other discovered great Sin and Folly through abounding Prosperity. So that I say, it is both a rare and difficult Thing; but by how much the more rare and difficult it is, by so much the more excellent and eminent when attained. Oh! For a Man to swim Chin deep in the Streams of Creature-Comforts, and yet not to forsake the Fountain of Living Waters; for a Man to have the Streams run pleasantly on each Hand of him, and yet to bathe and delight only in the Fountain as his Rest and Happiness; for a Man in the Height of Prosperity, to be able to say to God as the Psalmist in his Affliction did, *Psal. 73. 25. Whom have I in Heaven but thee, and there is none upon Earth I desire beside thee*; this is Noble Grace indeed. Oh! labour to come up to this! Whatever your Worldly Enjoyments are, though never so Great, so High, so Pleasant, yet as ever you would be ready for a Dying Hour, sit loose from all, die to all; the more dead we are to the World, the more ready we are to get out of the World. A Worldly Spirit, a Spirit in Love with this World, is most unready for a Dying Hour. How can he be ready to leave the World, that is in Love with the World? A Worldly Spirit is most Odious to the Spirit of God, and most unsuitable

to the future Life; and one living in that Spirit cannot be fit to die. 'Tis a great Saying I have read in one. *He is Perfect whose Soul is alienated from the World; but* (says he) *that Soul is far from God to whom this miserable Life is sweet:* That is to say, who is fond of these poor Things here. Oh! Die daily to the World, under all your Enjoyments of it, if you would indeed be ready to die.

3. For a Man to be Empty, and yet Full; to be destitute of all outward Comforts and Enjoyments, and yet to want Nothing, but to be Content, and to see All in God, and enjoy All in God: For a Man to be Afflicted and Distressed, and yet at the same time see a Fulness and Sufficiency of all Good and Happiness in a naked God, and naked Godliness, and accordingly to live up unto him, and rest satisfied in him, this is a Noble Strain of Grace indeed. This the Prophet, and in him the Church resolved upon *Hab. 3. 17, 18. Although the Fig-tree shall not Blossom, neither shall Fruit be in the Vine; the labour of the Olive shall fail, and the Field shall yield no Meat, the Flock shall be cut off from the Fold, and there shall be no Herd in the Stalls.* Here you see is a most sad Supposition, a most Forlorn and Destitute Condition, supposed to come: Well, and what then? In case all this come to pass, what will the Church do then? That the 18th Verse tells us, *Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my Salvation:* She is resolved to live upon God, and

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delight her self with God : She sees enough in him alone, and sets him, and her Interest in him, over-against all Wants, Losses, and Afflictions. So the Apostles, 2 Cor. 6. 10. who were *as having nothing, yet possessing a'l things.* They saw all in Christ, and enjoyed all in Christ. *Here (as one glosses upon the Place) we possess nothing, but do wander up and down from Place to Place ; yet possessing Christ, in him we possess all Things.* Oh ! For a Man to see and enjoy all in Christ, when the World frowns upon him, and is low with him, this is a Noble Strain of Grace ; and let me say this, that it is an Argument that we have Carnal Hearts, if we see not all in God, and enough in God, to satisfy and make us happy, whether we have any Thing or Nothing of this World. Heaven, which Death sends us to, if we are indeed ready for it, is nothing else but the Vision and Fruition of God, for there he is all in all : And certainly if we do not see all in God now, and enough in God now, we cannot suppose our selves to be so fully ready for Death and Eternity as we ought to be.

4. For a Man to have no Affliction, and yet to be deeply afflicted ; to be wholly free from all Personal Affliction, and yet greatly to lay to Heart, and be Afflicted, for the Afflictions of God's Name, and the People, this is Glorious Grace, Grace in Lustre. 'Tis the Observation of a worthy Divine, that in the Day of the Churches Trouble and Affliction, when both his Name and People do greatly suffer,

God

God does sometimes leave some of his People an Affluence of all outward Good Things; when others are stript of all their Comforts, they are full; when others are in Straits, they abound; neither is there any Cloud upon their Tabernacle. And this God does to try them, whether they will take up in their Enjoyments, and forget the Afflictions of his Name and People: And truly not to do so, but in such a Case to lay the Churches Affliction to Heart, and to Bleed and Mourn with the Bleeding Interest of God's Name and People, this is pure Grace, and marvellous pleasing to God. Such Grace some of the Saints have come up unto. Such Graces were found in *David*, 2 Sam. 7. 1. *And it came to pass when the King sat in his House, and the Lord had given him Rest round about from all his Enemies, that the King said unto Nathan the Prophet, See now I dwell in an House of Cedar, but the Ark of God dwelleth without Curtains.* Mark, all was well with *David*; he had Rest. and he dwelt in a House of Cedar; he had Things suitable for, and becoming, a King: Ah, but all was not well with the Interest of God, and his Worship: *David's* House and Interest prospered, but it fared not so well with the House and Interest of God: And therefore all his Enjoyments were as nothing to him, he so laid the Sufferings of God's Name and Worship to Heart. The like was found in *Nehemiah*, Chap. 2. All Things were well with him in his own Person: He was the King's Cupbearer, and liv-

ed under the Enjoyment of an Affluence of all outward Contentments, and yet was in deep Affliction of Spirit upon the Account of the Churches Affliction: *When I heard these Words* (lays he) Chap. 14. These Words! What Words? Why, that the *Remnant that were left of the Captivity were in great Affliction and Reproach; that the Wail of Jerusalem was broken down, and that the Gates thereof were burnt with Fire.* So Verse 3 *Now when I heard these Words I sat down and Wept, and Mourned certain Days, and Fasted and Prayed, before the God of Heaven; and in Chap. 2 beginning, his Countenance* ('tis said) *was sad* upon this Account. O, this was Rare Grace, Choice Grace! No Personal Affliction, yet deeply Afflicted in and with the Afflictions of the Church; so deeply Afflicted, that all his Personal Comforts, though great, were nothing to him. The like you find in *Daniel*, Chap. 10. 2, 3. O labour to come up to the Strain of Grace! It may be Things are well with you, and you have all that Heart can wish: But if they are not so with the Interests of God's Name and People, you should be deeply afflicted for this in the midst of all your Personal Comforts; and the more this Spirit is in you, the more excellent your Grace is.

5. For a Man to submit cheerfully to, and acquiesce in the Will of God, when most sharp and severe, upon this outward Interest, this is a Noble Strain of Grace. When God shall Exercise a Man with rending, tearing, Dispensations

sations, adding Sorrow to Sorrow to him, breaking him with Breach upon Breach, causing all his Waves and his Billows to go over him; and yet then for him quietly to acquiesce in, and cheerfully to submit to what God does, this is Choice Grace: Such Grace was found in *Aaron*, Lev. 10. 3. God slew Two of his Sons at once, and the Dispensation was attended with so many aggravating Circumstances, as made it almost unparallell'd, not to be equalled, so terrible was it, and yet under that great Stroke *Aaron held his Peace*, he submitted freely, and acquiesced cheerfully. The like was found in *Job*, when God had broken him all to pieces, he worships him, and blesses his Name, *Job* 12. 21, 22. And this was eminent in Christ himself, and was indeed his Crown and Glory: *Father, not my Will, but thy Will be done*, Matt. 26. 39. He freely submits his Will to the Fathers, tho' he saw the Father coming forth against him in a most Terrible Dispensation. Oh, for a poor Soul to lie down at the Foot of God, and to be so melted into his Will, as cheerfully to bow to it, and acquiesce in it, under the sharpest Dispensations! This is Noble Grace indeed. Oh! Press after this, this is very necessary to prepare us for a Dying Hour; and the more of this, the more ready for that Hour.

6. For a Man to maintain the Actings of his Faith in God, and to think honourably of him when yet he frowns, and all things seem to make against the Soul, this is a No-

ble Strain of Grace. Such Grace was found in *Abraham*, who, 'tis said, *against Hope, believed in Hope*, and so *was strong in Faith*, Rom. 4. 18, 19, 20. When he had an Encouragement, yea, when all things opposed him, yet then he maintained his Faith in God. So *Jeb*, Chap. 13. 15. *Though he slay me yet will I trust in him.* Oh! To love a Smiting God, and to trust in a Slaying God, this is Noble Grace: For a Man to maintain the Actings of his Faith in God, when he comes forth as an Enemy against him, this God calls for. He expects, *That when we walk in Darknes, and see no Light, then we should trust in the Name of the Lord*; and so to do is Noble Grace, *Isa.* 50. 10, 11. Truly 'tis oftentimes the Case of God's People, that they walk in Darknes, and see no Light; all Things seem to be against them. Possibly God Frowns and Afflicts; he Frowns within, and he Afflicts without: 'Yea, the poor Soul 'sees nothing but Difficulties and Discouragements look which Way he will: He looks into 'his own Heart, and there he cannot find any one 'Grace or Gracious Disposition: He looks in- 'to the World, and there perhaps he can- 'not see any one Promise that he dares lay 'hold upon: He looks back for former Ex- 'periences, and they are all out of Sight: 'He runs to Evidences, and they are all 'blotted that he cannot Read'. Thus he is beset with Difficulties, and all Things seem to make against him, both within and without; and yet now when thus in the
Dark,

Dark, for the Soul to believe in God, and think well and honourably of him, this is Noble Grace indeed, this is Faith in Lustre; to call Christ Lord, when he calls us Dog, and to fasten by Faith upon him, when he is beating us off, as to Sense at least, as it was with the Woman, *Matth 15. 26, 27, 28.* this is Glorious Grace: For a Man to think well, and hope well, and believe well, in the Face of Frowns and Discouragements: For a Man, when God is frowning and smiting, cordially to say, this is but for a time, he will smile again; he is but behind the Curtain, and will appear again; his Desire is not to ruin me, but refine me: He is but making me to prize his Grace and Presence more: There is Love in all this. Oh! For a Man to believe that there is Love in God's Heart, when he sees nothing but Frowns in his Face, and meets with nothing hardly but Blows from his Hand: For a Man to believe that God intends nothing but Good, when he inflicts variety of Evils, surely this is Glorious Grace: Oh that you would labour for such Grace! Such Grace will look Death in the Face with Boldness. 'Tis a great Speech which Holy *Rutherford* hath: 'I lay Inhabitations on my Thoughts (says he,) that they receive no Slander of my only Beloved: Let him even say out of his own Mouth there is no Hope, yet will I die in that sweet Beguile: Is it not so? But I shall see the Salvation of God; it is my Joy to believe under the Water, and to die with

‘Faith in my Hand, griping of Christ. Beg
 ‘such Grace of God’.

7. For a Man to see a Beauty and Excellency in Service, as well as in Enjoyment, in Work, as well as in Reward, and accordingly to have his Heart lye in it, this also is Noble Grace. Sirs, there is a Beauty and Excellency in Service; for a Man to be used and employed for God, and to act for him in the World, is the highest Honour and Excellency, (next to Union and Communion with him) that can be put upon a poor Creature: ‘Twas the Honour of Christ, it is the Honour of Angels; Service is better than Enjoyment: *’Tis a more Blessed Thing to give than to receive, Acts 20. 35.* Now when a Soul has Answerable Thoughts and Apprehensions about it, does practically, and indeed, see a Beauty and Excellency in Service for God, and accordingly is active for him, willing to be employed by him, and that though he has no Reward at present from him, this is Noble Grace. This was found in Paul, *Unto me (saith he) is this Grace given to preach unto the Gentiles the Unsearchable Riches of Christ, Eph. 3. 8.* He look’d on’t as an Honour, a Favour, to be employed in the Work and Service of Christ. And again, *1 Tim. 1. 12. I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he accounted me Faithful, putting me into the Ministry.* Here he blesses Christ his Lord and Master for using him in his Work; yea, such a Worth, Beauty and Excellency, did he see in his Service, that he was content

to stay out of Heaven, and the Bosom of Christ's Love, where yet he earnestly longed to be, that he might do further Service for Christ in this World. So you find, *Phil. 1. 21, 22, 23.* Oh! For a Soul to long, and long earnestly for Heaven, and the immediate Enjoyment of Christ there, and yet to be content to stay here in a sinful, sinning, troublesome World, meely to do some further Service for Christ, and to Honour him yet in the Discharge of his Work and Warfare, this is High Grace. This Holy *Rutherford* hath attained unto; he could under high Assurance of Heaven be content to stay many Years out of it to Preach Christ. The same Mind dwelt in Christ himself, *Who went about doing Good, making it his Meat and Drink to do his Father's Will, and to finish his Work.* Oh! When a Soul comes to this, then he is fit to Live, and fit to Die: When with that Ancient Father we come to say indeed, *What is it to live, and not to live for Use and Service?* When we value Life and Days in this World no further than we are some way serviceable to Christ, this is growing Grace.

8. For a Man to rejoyce in the Gifts, Graces, and Uses of others, and that though they outshine and eclipse his: For a Man to rejoyce to see Grace flourishing in others, and to see the Work of God carried on by others, though he himself be laid aside, and does not share in the Honour of it, this is Pure Grace, Grace in Lustre. Such Grace was found in *Moses*, *Enviest thou for my Sake?* (said he to

Joshua, who would have had him to forbid *Eladad* and *Medad* to Prophecie in the Camp) *Would God that all the Lord's People were Prophets, and that the Lord would put his Spirit upon them*, Numb. 11. 29. He was so far from envying at them, that he wishes there were more of them. Such Grace was found also in *John the Baptist*, John 3. 26, 27, 30. He Rejoyced in Christ's being owned and honoured, and flock'd unto, and in the increase of his Esteem with Men, though to his own abasement. In *Verse 26.* some of *John's* Disciples come and tell him, That all Men come to Christ: Well, says he, 'tis but his due. *Ver. 27.* A Man can receive nothing unless it be given him from Heaven: You your selves bear me Witness that I said I am not the Christ; and this my Joy is fulfilled, that he must Increase, but I must Decrease. As if he had said, 'tis so far from being a Trouble to me, that 'tis indeed the compleating of my Joy. Such Grace was found in *Paul*, Phil. 1. 18. who rejoyced that Christ was Preached, though with a Design to cloud and eclipse him: *Christ is Preached, and I therein do rejoyce, yea, and will rejoyce.* Some are apt to think 'twill be an Affliction to me (says he) that Christ is Preached by any but my self, whereas indeed this is Ground of great Joy to me; I rejoyce that though I cannot be permitted to Preach Christ my self, yet that so many others do Preach him. And I remember a great Speech of *Luther*, (arguing the same Grace to be in him) writing to *Melancthon*

to comfort him under the Lets and Oppositions the Work and Cause of God met withal in his Time; the Cause of God was opposed, and his Work obstructed: In the Sense of which *Melancthon* was greatly troubled and dejected; and *Luther* understanding it, writes an Epistle to him, to comfort and encourage him, in which he has this Saying: 'God (says he) is able to raise the Dead, and he is able to support his falling Cause, and to raise it when fallen. If he shall not account us worthy to be used therein, let him do it by others, and make use of others'. Mark, he was content the Work of God should be done by others. There are Two Things which I look upon to carry as Pure and Noble Grace in them as any whatsoever: One is, to be willing to be used in God's Work, without being taken Notice of, or having the Honour of it: The other is, for a Man to rejoyce to see the Work of God carried on by others, though he himself be laid aside, and has not the Honour to be used therein. Oh Labour for such Grace! Grace that will rejoyce in the Gifts, Graces, Uses and Successes of others, though you thereby are outshined.

9. For a Man to have great Affection to the Name and Honour of God and Christ, and to think nothing too much to do, too hard to suffer, or too dear to part withal, for the Service and Advancement thereof, this is Noble Grace. When a Man hath high and paramount Affections to the Name of God

God and Christ, loving and preferring of it infinitely before all his own Interests and Concerns, being ready to be, do, or suffer, any Thing for the Service of it. Oh what Grace is this! Such Grace some of the Saints have attained unto. *Lord (says Moses concerning Israel) if thou wilt, forget their Sin; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of the Book which thou hast Written, Exod. 32. 32.* What is here meant by the Book which God had written I shall not now stand to enquire or determine; but to be content to be blotted out of it, was, to be sure, a great Piece of Self-denial; and this *Moses* desired, you see, rather than that the People should be utterly destroyed; and all because he knew how much the Glory of God was concerned, and would suffer by their Destruction, as appears by comparing this Verse with Verse 12. The Sum (as one observes) is, 'That *Moses* ' prefers the Glory of God before his own ' Salvation, whose Glory was conjoyn'd with ' *Israel's* Preservation, in respect of the Promises made to the Fathers, and in respect ' of the Blasphemies which the *Egyptians*, ' and other Adversaries were ready to belch ' out against God, should he destroy them: Such Grace was found also in *John Baptist*, in the Place lately mentioned, *John 3.* latter end, who was content Christ should raise himself out of his Abasement. Such Grace was found in Christ, who preferred his Father's Glory before his own Life, *John 22. 27, 28.* Such Grace was found in *Paul*, who was willing

ling not only to be bound, but even to die, for the Sake of Christ, Acts 21. 13. for the Name, the Honour of Christ: Christ's Honour was so dear to him, that he could be content to die to serve it; he preferred it before his Life: Oh my Beloved! When a Soul shall be so swallowed up with Love and Zeal for the Glory of God, and the Interest of Christ in the World, as that his own Interests are in a manner overlook'd and forgotten by him: When to see the Name of God exalted shall be a Man's greatest Triumph; and to see it debased shall be his greatest Trouble: When his Practical Language shall be such as this, Father, here I am; which Way soever thy Glory lyes I am ready to serve thee in it; 'tis Honour enough for me to honour God, 'tis Happiness enough for me to glorifie God, and therefore let God do with me, and let him call me to do whatever he will in order thereunto; let him, if he pleases, eclipse my Name, and throw my Glory in the Dust, so be it he will thereby raise his own Name, and brighten his own Glory; let him, if he pleases, make me a Footstool, and let me be trampled upon, so be it he will advance himself into the Throne thereby; let me die, if his Will be so, that his Glory may live; whatever becomes of me, though I should be stripped of all, though my Name and Interest should not, yet let God be magnified, let God have Honour in the World, and let the Interest and Kingdom of Christ prosper, 'tis enough, I am satisfied, When, I say,

say, 'tis thus with a Soul, this speaks Noble Grace indeed. Oh press after such Grace! The more you love the Name of God and Christ, the fitter you are either to Live or Die.

10. For a Man not only to be willing to Suffer, but also to rejoyce in Sufferings, for the Sake of Christ and the Gospel: For a Man cheerfully to take up the Cross for Christ, and to look upon it as his Crown and Glory, as an Honour and Preferment to him, this is also a high Strain of Grace, and is greatly Pleasing to God. The Cross, my Beloved, in it self, *is a black, sour Crab tree*, (as one calls it;) but tho' such in it self, yet as 'tis born for the Sake of Christ, and so his Cross; 'tis an Honour and not a Reproach; a Crown of Glory, a Royal Diadem upon the Head of a poor Creature; *To you is given on the behalf of Christ to suffer for his Sake*, Phil. 1. 29. Sufferings for Christ are Noble, Royal, Honourable Gifts, more Honourable than the Crowns and Kingdoms of this World: A Prison for Christ is more Honourable than the stateliest Palaces of the greatest Princes: Bonds for Christ are more Honourable than Ropes of Pearl and Diamonds. Now when a Soul shall look on these Things as such, and accordingly rejoyce in them, this is Noble Grace indeed: Such Grace was found in the Disciples, *Acts 5. 41. Who rejoyced* (or, as the Word is, *leap'd for Joy*) *that they were counted worthy to suffer Shame for the Name of Christ*: Or, as the Words

Words may be rendered, that they were Honoured to be Dishonoured for Christ. So the Apostle and his Brethren, *Rom. 5. 3. We glory in Tribulation; and I rejoyce (says Paul) in Reproaches, Necessities, and Persecutions, for Christ, 2 Cor. 12. 10.* So those Worthies, *Heb. 10. 34. Who took joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods.* This Christ calls for, *Mat. 5. 22. Rejoyce, and be exceeding Glad, when Men Persecute you for my Sake.* And again, *Count it all Joy when you fall into divers Afflictions, &c. James 1. 12.* 'Tis admirable to think how some of the Saints, both in former and latter Times, have gloried in the Cross of Christ, and even longed for it. *Luther* longed for the Honour of Martyrdom, and was ready even to Envy those that were called unto it when he was not: For Writing to some of his Acquaintance in Bonds for Christ and the Gospel, he breaks out into this Complaint: 'O miserable me, who have been first in Teaching these Things, but last, and perhaps never worthy, to be a Partaker of your Bonds and Fires'. Oh labour for such Grace! We think it much if we be content to suffer; but we should rejoyce in Sufferings; glory in the Cross, carry our selves under Sufferings for Christ, as looking upon them to be (for so indeed they are) an Honour and Priviledge unto us.

11. For a Man in a Prosperous Condition, all Things going smoothly with him in the World, to be willing to loose Anchor, and be gone hence to Heaven; yea, for a Man to long

long, and long earnestly for a Dissolution, that he might be with Christ fully, and for ever with him, this is Noble Grace. Sirs, take a Man whose Mountain of Prosperity stands strong, whose Paths are as it were strewed with Roses, the Roses of Creature-Contentments; who has all that Heart can wish of this World's Good, the Streams running pleasantly on each Hand of him, for such an one in such a Condition to long, and long earnestly to be gone to his Dear Lord, that so he may be fully like him, and may see him as he is, that he may be eternally in his Presence, swallowed up in the Love, Praises and Admirations of him, be a perfect Partaker of his Life and Image, this is great and glorious Grace. When though a Man's Condition in the World be every way such as that he may well say, *Is it good to be here*; yet the daily Pulse of his Soul is that of the Spouse, *Cant. 8. 14. Make haste, my Beloved, and be thou like a Roe; or young Hart, upon the Mountains of Spices*; make haste to fetch me hence to Heaven, this is Noble Grace, and that which every one does not come up to. Indeed, when we are in Affliction, and our Lives are bitter unto us, by reason of many and great Trials, Difficulties and Temptations, when many are willing to be gone; but this is so far from Noble Grace, that this may be where there is no Grace at all. But when the Sun shines upon our Tabernacle, and sets not; when we live in a Paradise of Earthly Comforts and Contentments, then

then to pant and long to be gone to be with Christ, then to suspire and breath after the other World, and with an Holy Impatience to look out for it, this is glorious Grace, Grace that carries an Heavenly Odour and Savour with it. Thus I have mentioned some of those more Noble and Excellent Strains of Grace for our Imitation, which I would have you to labour to come up unto; and the more you come up to these, the more fit you are to live, and the more ready to die.

C H A P. X.

Wherein further Directions are laid down in order to the setting Things aright, and making him ready for a Dying Hour.

Seventhly, **W**ould you indeed have all Things right and in order before a Dying Hour comes? Then be diligent and faithful in the Work of God, that Work which God in a particular Manner hath given you to do: We have all our Work to do, and that given us from God; we have General Work, and Special Work.

First, We have General Work to do; the Work of our Christian Calling, the Work of our Salvation, which we are Commanded to work out with Fear and Trembling, Phil. 2. 12. the Work of Faith, and the Labour of Love;

Love; the Work of Mortification, Self-denial, and the like. We have also,

Secondly, Special Work to do, the Work of our particular Stations and Places; Work that is incumbent upon us, as we stand thus and thus related, being Magistrates or Ministers, the Masters of Families, or the like: For all such Relations bring their Work and Duty with them. And this indeed is properly our own Work, and this we should be Diligent and Faithful in, as ever we would be found ready for a Dying Hour. *Paul* had this Work to do, and he was Diligent and Faithful in the Discharge of it, which gave him Comfort when he came to Die, *2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8.* *I am now ready to be offered, and the Time of my Departure is at Hand, I have fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course; henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, &c.* He had been faithful in the Discharge of his Work while he lived; and being now to die he found the Comfort and Sweetness of it: Yea, this was that which our Lord himself comforted himself withal when he was to Die, and in the Sense of it goes to his Father with Boldness for his Glory, *John 17. 14.* *I have Glorified thee on Earth, I have finished the Work which thou gavest me to do.* Indeed he had a great deal of Work given him by the Father, and he was Faithful and Punctual in the Discharge of it all, which was a Comfort to him now he was to die: And he himself tells us, *that is the Blessed Servant whom when his Lord shall*

come

come he shall find so doing ; that is, Faithful and Diligent in the Discharge of his proper Work, Matt. 24. 46. Truly this is the Posture which some (though but few) are found in; they make Conscience to Discharge the Duty that is incumbent upon them ; they say with their Lord, I must Work the Work of him that sent me while it is Day, for the Night cometh when no Man can Work, John 9. 5. They see Night coming, Death coming, Judgment coming, Eternity coming; and accordingly they desire to lay out their whole Souls in the Work of God, to live up to the Laws of Christ in every Relation ; and they look upon that Day as lost, wherein they have not done somewhat for God and their own Souls : And how comfortably may such look Death in the Face when it comes ! I have read the Life of a Holy Minister, who was seized upon by Sicknes, which was unto Death, while he was Preaching the Everlasting Gospel ; and laying a few days sick, e're he died, a Fellow-Labourer of his, another holy Minister, coming to visit him, and seeing Death in his Face, cried out in some Passion, O dear Sir, are you going to Heaven from us ? To whom he replied, Yes, I bless God that my Master found me in his Work. Truly, might a Man have his Choice and Option, he would have Death to find him while he is engaged in the Work of God. Oh Study your own Work ! Study the Work and Duty of your Christian Calling : Study that Work and Duty which is incumbent upon

upon you in your particular Relations, and beg of God a Heart to be diligent in the Discharge of one and the other.

8. Would you indeed have all right; and in order, in the Matters of your Souls, e'er a dying Hour comes? Then be sure to suffer no Distance or Estrangement to grow between God and you, but labour to keep up a constant and intimate Acquaintance with him : *Acquaint thyself with God, and be at Peace*, Job 22. 21. The more of an Holy Intimacy and Acquaintance with God we maintain, the more we are at Peace with our selves : And I am sure, the more we are at Peace in our selves, the more ready we are for a Dying Hour. Wo and alas for us! How oft do we let fall our Converse and Communion with God, and suffer sad Distances and Estrangements to grow up between him and us? And indeed, (my Beloved) it is a sad and amazing Thing to think how suddenly and imperceptibly Distances and Estrangements will grow up between God and a Man's Soul : For my own part, should I have heard of it only by the hearing of the Ear, and had not found it by too many sad and woful Experiences, I could not have believed how suddenly and imperceptibly Distances and Estrangements will grow up between God and a Man's Soul ; yea, and that after the nearest, liveliest, and most intimate Acquaintance and Communion with him, which calls upon us to be very Watchful and Circumspect as to this Thing ;

Thing: And (my Beloved) as you will die with Boldness and Comfort, let me advise and persuade you to give all Diligence to keep up constant Intercourse and Acquaintance with God, and watch narrowly against all Distance between him and you. Which of us that knows any thing of the Things of God, knows not that we suffer Distances and Estrangements to grow up between God and us? We cannot tell how, with any tolerable Boldness and Comfort, to look him in the Face in a Duty, or scarce to think of him with Delight; much less shall we be able to look him in the Face with Comfort in Death, in case we suffer Distances to grow up between him and us. Moreover, take this for a sure Rule, that the more you are versed in Communion with God, and do maintain an Holy Intimacy and Correspondence with him, the more Boldness and Comfort you will have when you come to Die. Then you will be able to say, I am now going to be, and to live for ever immediately with that God, with whom I have lived with much Sweet and Intimate Communion here; I am now going to converse more fully with him in Heaven, with whom I have enjoyed much sweet Converse here on Earth. Should Death find a Man under Distances and Estrangements between God and him, it must necessarily be uncomfortable unto him; but when there is an Holy Intimacy kept up between God and the Soul, then the Soul need not fear, or be ashamed to look Death and
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Judgment both in the Face: *Little Children,* saith *John*, *abide in them, that when he shall appear, we may have Boldness, and not be Ashamed, before him at his Coming,* 1 John 2. 28. We are put into Christ by Faith at our first Conversion, and we abide in him by After-Acts of Faith and Communion: And this abiding in him is the Way to have Boldness before him at his Coming, therefore mind this, and pray much about this; take heed of Distances growing up between God and you, and labour to have those Sweet Visits, those Sweet Intercourses of Love, those Blessed Acts of Communion, kept up between God and you, that are wont to be kept between him and his watchful, close-walking Saints. And in order hereunto take Three or Four short Hints.

First, Look upon and Esteem Converse and Communion with God to be (as indeed it is) your highest Happiness, both here and in Heaven; the highest Happiness Souls are capable of here, is to live in Converse and Communion with God, in such Ways as are suitable to this present State; and the highest Happiness Souls are capable of Eternally in Heaven, is to live in the Divine Presence, and to see God's Face continually, and to lodge for ever in the Bosom of his Love. We may run out to a thousand Things and when we have done all, this will be the highest, and indeed the only Happiness of Souls, (*viz.*) to Converse with God, and to enjoy Communion with God; and the

at miss of this, will miss of all Happiness for
 ever. Accordingly we should prize it, and press
 after it; we should account all Things as No-
 thing on this side God, and Communion with
 God in Christ. The Saints of Old have done
 so; *Many, saith David, will say, Who will shew us
 any Good? But, Lord, lift thou up the Light of
 thy Countenance upon us, Psalm 4. 6.* As if he
 should say, while others are seeking their Hap-
 piness from Carnal and Earthly Enjoyments,
 Corn, Wine, and Oil, the Happiness we desire
 is thy Love, thy Favour, the Beamings out of
 the Light of thy Countenance upon our Souls.
Psalm 39. 7. Now, Lord, what wait I for?
My Hope is in thee; I have done with the Streams;
 as if he should say, and I desire to cleave whol-
 ly to the Fountain: I have done with the
 Creatures of which I have formerly been too
 fond, and I would now take up my whole Rest,
 Solace and Satisfaction in thy self alone: And
 also, *Psalm 73. 25, 26. Whom have I in Hea-
 ven but thee! And there is none in Earth I desire in
 comparison of thee: My Heart and my Flesh fail-
 eth; but God is the Strength of my Heart, and my
 Portion for ever.* The same Spirit dwelt and a-
 cted in *Austin.* 'All Fulness and Plenty (saith
 he) which is not my God, is Want and Pover-
 ty': And again elsewhere, 'Thou, Lord, art
 my God, my Happiness; and unto thee, and
 after thee, do I Breathe and Suspire Day and
 Night'. O, (my Beloved) did we indeed
 prize Communion with God more, we
 should

should live more in Communion with him. And this take for a Certain Truth, that it will never be well with us indeed till we see All in God, and account we enjoy All Happiness in enjoying Communion with him.

Secondly, In the close of every Day take a serious view of, and diligently consider what hath passed between God and you, what Transactions there have been between God and your Souls that Day: There doth not a Day pass wherein there do not many Things pass between God and his People; and he that would prevent Distances and Estrangements between God and him, should seriously ponder and lay to Heart what hath passed between God and his Soul; what Transactions there have been between God and him that Day. On the one Hand, ponder and consider what hath passed from God to you, and what his Carriage towards you hath been, what Approaches he hath made to you, what Intimates of Love, what Overtures of Communion, what Discoveries of himself and his Glory, how far and in what way God hath been dealing with your Spirits, convincing, enlightening, quickening, or comforting of them; what Calls he hath given you, what Myrrh he hath dropped upon the Handle of the Lock, what Tastes you have had of his Sweetness and Graces, what Holy Impressions he hath made upon you, and the like. On the other Hand, ponder and consider what hath passed from
you

you to God, and what your Carriages towards him have been; what Acceptation and Entertainment you have given him, making his Approaches to you; what Value you have put upon his Presence, and the Intimations of his Love; how far you have Embraced and Improved the Overtures he made you of farther Communion with him; what Awe there hath been upon you of his Holiness, and his All-seeing Eye; what Outgoings of Heart there have been found within you after him; what Breathings of Love, what Holy Longings and Desires, what Springings and Workings of Spiritual Joy, and Delight of Soul to him, and in him; what Place he hath had in your Thoughts and Contemplations; how far you have lived to him, and upon him; wherein you may have either Grieved or Delighted his Spirit, and the like. Thus in the Close of every Day ponder and consider what hath passed between God and you, and accordingly deport and demean your selves before him. Wherein you have failed or been defective in any Thing, in order to keeping up Communion between God and you, be humbled, and set all right by Faith and Prayer, adore God in his Acts of Grace and Condescension, (as to be sure you will find Cause so to do) and loath your selves for any Acts of Sin or Unkindness, Undutifulness or Disrespect, that you have been guilty of towards God: O this would be a Blessed Course indeed, to prevent Distances and
G Estrange.

Estrangements between God and you. This *David* calls a *Communion with his whole Heart*; and enjoyns it as a Duty of the highest Importance; *Stand in Awe, and Sin not; Commune with your Hearts, and be Still*, Psal. 4. 4. It is what he lived in the Practice of, *Psal. 77. 6.* (if he was the Author of that Psalm) *I Communed with mine own Heart, and my Spirit made diligent Search.* O be punctual in this Work!

Thirdly, Be much Conversant, and that with all Spiritual Diligence, in the Ways and Duties of Communion; those Ways and Duties wherein God is wont to meet his People, and maintain Converse and Communion with them; and in all of them wait for God, and his Approaches to you. There are those which we may call Ways and Duties of Communion; Ways and Duties, wherein God and his People do hold Converse with each other; wherein God Visits and Communicates himself unto his People, and wherein his People may be said to Visit God, and make Out after God; and these are the Use of the Word and Sacraments, the Exercise of Prayer, Meditation, Self-examination, and the like: Now as ever you would prevent the growing up of Distances and Estrangements between God and you, see that you are much Conversant in these, and that with an Holy and Spiritual Diligence, waiting for God, and the Manifestations of God to your Souls in them; these are the Galleries wherein Christ and his People

ple do take Sweet Turns together, the green Beds wherein they lye down in the Bosom of each others Love : Therefore keep a constant and diligent Attendance on God in these. And in all your Attendances on him, look after Converse with him ; let it be your solemn Aim to Converse with him, and see his Face, to have a Visit, a Smile, a descent of Love from him. I do suppose you to be such as do, and will attend on Publick Ordinances, and wait for God there, as they waited for the Spirit at Jerusalem : That only then which I would press you to in this present Case shall be, to be much conversant in Prayer and Meditation between God and your own Souls, in these Two great Duties of Communion with God, Secret Prayer and Meditation : Oh the Loss as to Communion with God that we expose our selves unto, by being no more in Prayer and Holy Meditation ! The Holy Ones of Old, and those that have been Men of the highest Communion with God, have also been Men of much Prayer, and great Meditation ; as I might instance in *David*, and *Daniel*, and others : And indeed their Communion with God came in, and was kept up this Way. God (you know) hath told us, *The Prayer of the Upright is his Delight*, Prov. 15. 8. And Christ bespeaks the Prayer of his Spouse as most Pleasing and Delightful to him, *Cant. 2. 14. O my Dove ! Thou art in the Clefts of the Rock, in the Secret Places of the Stairs ; let me see thy*

Countenance, and bear thy Voice, for Sweet is thy Voice, and thy Countenance is Comely; as if he should say, Approach to me in secret Prayer, I will assure thee it will be most Sweet and Pleasant to me. And as he thus delights in the Prayers of his People, so he will surely delight them in their Prayers with the Visits of his Love, and Communications of his Grace, the Beamings out of his Glory to and upon their Souls; he hath promised to *make them joyful in the House of Prayer*; yea, he hath promised to perform the whole Grace of the New Covenant in Answer to their Prayers, *Ezek. 36. 37.* Oh the great Things God doth for his People, and the sweet Communion that is kept up between him and them in a Way of Prayer! I remember a Saying of one, *He that is not much at Prayer, will never be a Man of much Excellency*: And I may as truly say, *He that is not much in Prayer, is never like to be a Man of much Communion with God.* And so for Meditation: Oh how Sweet, how Heaven-like a Duty is that! Oh how much of God is let out many times to the Souls of his People herein! *David* experienced this, *Psal. 63. 5, 6.* *My Soul shall be satisfied as with Marrow and Fatness, and my Mouth shall Praise thee with joyful Lips, when I remember thee upon my Bed, and meditate on thee in the Night-Watches.* While he was Conversant in this Duty of Meditation, his Soul was filled with Joy and Satisfaction, as with Marrow and Fatness. Again, saith he, *My Meditation of thee*

thee shall be Sweet, Psal. 104. 34. Oh be much and frequent with God in these Ways and Duties of Communion.

Fourthly, Give Christ his due Place and Honour in all your Making out after Communion with God. *Joseph* told his Brethren, *They should not see his Face unless they brought their Brother Benjamin with them* : And truly you are not to see the Face of God in any of the forementioned Ways and Duties, unless you bring Christ with you, and give him his due Place and Honour therein ; that is to say, unless you Eye him, and act Faith upon him, as the only Way and Medium of Communion with God : Christ bespeaks this at our Hands while he tells us, *I am the Way the Truth and the Life ; no Man cometh to the Father but by me*, John 14. 6. And by his Blood it is that we have a Way opened to us into the Holy of Holies, Access for our Persons and Prayer into the Divine Presence, *Hb. 10. 19, 20.* Yea, not only as he purchased a Liberty, and opened a Way for us to approach into the Presence of God ; but having done this by his Mediation and Intercession, it is that any of us come to God : Hence he is said *to save to the very uttermost all that come to God by him, seeing he ever lives to make Intercession for us*, *Hb. 7. 25.* Indeed, were it not for Christ, none of us could ever hope to see the Face of God and live : none of us could ever hope to see one Smile of God's Face, one Embrace of his Bosom, any the least Descent and Emanation of Love from him : Were it not

for Christ, when we come unto God, we should find him to be a consuming Fire, and when he and our Souls did meet, it would be as the meeting of devouring Fire, and withered Stubble. In a Word, all Communication of Grace and Love from God to us are by and through Christ. And all the Love, the Duty, the Homage, we render to God, must be all rendered to him by and through Christ, if ever we find Acceptation with him. Have Christ therefore in your Eye in all your Approaches unto God, as to him *by whom we have Access to the Father, Eph. 2. 18.* Let the real Language of your Souls be, If I have any one Smile from God, it must be upon the Account of Christ; if he sheweth himself pacified towards me, it must be through his Blood; if he gives out any Grace, any Favour, any Blessing to me, it will be upon the Sole Account of his Mediation; if either my Person or Services be accepted of the Lord, it must be in and through this Mediator. Moreover, how great soever the Distance between God and my Soul is, yet Christ can bring me nigh unto him; and however unworthy of, or unsuitable to, Communion with God I am in my self, yet such is his well-pleasedness in Christ, that Well-beloved Son of his, that I will hope through him to find Grace in his Sight, and to be lodged in the Bosom of his Love. Thus put all the Honour upon Christ that is due to him in this Business, this is what is pleasing to the Father: And the more you thus Ho-

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nour him, the fuller and more constant will your Converse and Communion with God be.

Ninthly, Would you indeed have all right and in order for a dying Hour? Would you be ready for that last and great Work? Then live wholly and constantly upon Christ and his Righteousness for your Justification and Acceptation with God, both Living and Dying. The more we live out of our selves upon Christ, and his Righteousness, for Justification and Acceptation with God, the more ready Posture we are in for a Dying Hour: This indeed is the main Thing; and when we have done all that ever we can to Deck and Adorn our selves with Grace and Glorious Dispositions, still we must live out of our selves, and out of all those Ornaments, upon the naked Righteousness of Christ for Justification and Salvation. This is that which the Scripture calls the Readiness of the Lamb's Wife, *Rev. 19. 7, 8* *Let us be glad and rejoice, for the Marriage of the Lamb is come, and his Wife hath made her self ready.* And wherein that Readiness lay the next Words will tell you: *To her was granted to be Cloathed with fine Linen, clean and white, which Fine Linen is the Righteousness of the Saints;* that is, the Righteousness of Christ imputed to the Saints through believing. This is the *best Robe*, mentioned *Luke 15. 22.* a Robe indeed which covers all our Nakedness, that beautifies and adorns us, and renders us most amiable

in God's Eye. Whatsoever Spots and Blemishes, whatever Failings and Defects may be upon us, yet these are not seen while God looks upon us as Cloathed with the Righteousness of his Son; and we by Faith do live upon that Righteousness as the Sole Matter of our Justification and Acceptance with him: And let me tell you, the more clear and distinct the Actings of our Faith are, in carrying us out of our selves, and all Self-righteousness, and relying wholly on Christ and his Righteousness, the more ready and comfortable Posture we are in for a Dying Hour. This was the great Thing *Paul* coveted and pressed after to the very last, and which he accounted all Things but Dung for; *Phil. 3. 8, 9.* *I count all Things but Dung that I may win Christ, and be found in him, not having my own Righteousness, which is by the Law, but the Righteousness of Faith, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith.* He dreaded the Thoughts of being found in any Thing of his own; he trembled to think of standing upon his own Bottom, the Bottom of his own Worth and Righteousness, when he should come to die, and he cleaved intirely unto, and relied wholly upon Christ, and his most perfect Righteousness. Oh let me tell you, *Paul* had as much, and perhaps more, to have rested upon than Ten Thousand of us; for Gifts, for Graces, for Privileges, for Services, for Successes, for Sufferings for Christ, he went beyond any meer Man that ever lived; and *Chrysostom* observes

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of him, that he feared nothing but Sin; to displease God, and to dishonour him, was the only Thing that was terrible to him; and the Scripture gives a large and frequent Account of his other Attainments: But still he goeth on of all, and his Language is, None but Christ! None but Christ! Not but that he also presseth after the greatest Eminency and Exactness in Holiness, as you find in the following Verses of this Third to the *Philippians*: And indeed this is the True Spirit of the Gospel, to press after the greatest Eminency and Exactness in Holiness; to cover to attain, if possible, unto Angelical Holiness, and yet under, and after all, to live singly and entirely on a Naked Christ, and his Righteousness, for Justification and Acceptation with God; and the more you come to, and live in, this Spirit, the more ready you are for Death, and a Blessed Eternity. This was a great Part of the Ground of the Church's Rejoycing. *Isa. 63. 10.* *I will greatly rejoyce in the Lord, my Soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the Garments of my Salvation, and hath covered me with a Robe of Righteousness, which Chrysostom, and others, both Ancient and Modern, interpret of the Righteousness of Christ: And indeed no greater Ground of Rejoycing to a Man or Woman, whether living or dying, than to be clothed with the Robe of the Righteousness of Christ: I shall only put you in mind of a Saying I have heard from an Holy Man*

the Day before he died: *My Friends* (saith he, speaking to my self and others) *I have walked with God these Thirty Years, and have enjoyed a Good Measure of the Assurance of his Love ; but now that I am come to die, I do not place my Comfort on any of all these, but on the infinite Satisfaction of Jesus Christ.* Oh there, there, when we have done all, we must lay the Weight and Stress of our Souls Comfort, Salvation and All! And therefore be sure you live out of your selves upon Christ. It is a great Saying *Luther* hath to this Purpose, *Lord Jesus* (saith he) *thou art my Righteousness, and I am thy Sin ; thou tookest mine,* (meaning his Sin) *and thou gavest me thine,* (meaning his Righteousness ;) *thou tookest that which thou wast not, and thou gavest me that which I was not ;* intending the Exchange that Christ had made with him, giving him his Righteousness for his Sin. Oh let this be the Language of our Souls to Christ, so shall we be found ready when a Dying Hour comes.

Tenthly, Would you indeed die with Comfort? Then beg God to stand by you, and give you actual Grace in a Dying Hour; and make it one of your great Works to Treasure many Prayers for this beforehand. When you have done all, should God withdraw his Presence, and the Influences of his Grace and Love, from you when you come to die, Death would be in a great measure uncomfortable to you; but if God will be with you, if God will stand by you, if he

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will vouchsafe you the Influences and Communications of his Grace in a Dying Hour, then now will your Souls triumph over Death? This indeed will sweeten Death: They are great Words of David in Psalm 23. 4. *Though I walk through the Valley of the Shadow of Death I will fear no Evil, for thou art with me:* Having the Presence of God with him, he was not, he would not, be afraid; even in the very Valley of the Shadow of Death. Truly without the Presence of God we cannot live comfortably; whatsoever our Attainments in Grace have been, yet if God withdraw his Presence from us we can do nothing, we can bear nothing, we cannot perform the least Duty, we cannot resist the least Temptation, we cannot grapple with the least Corruption, nor carry through as we ought, the least Difficulty; much less shall we be able to die with Comfort if God withdraw; therefore I say, beg God to stand by you in a Dying Hour, let it be your daily Prayer to God,

First, That he would be with you in the Difficulties of Life.

Secondly, That he would not leave you in the Conflicts and Agonies of Death. And indeed we should not pass that Day wherein we do not treasure up one Prayer for this beforehand; and thus doing, God will not leave us, God will not fail us, in that last and great Difficulty; at least he will not leave us in Point of Grace; our Lord himself was left in the Agonies of Death by the

Father, in Point of Comfort, which put him to that Outcry, *Why hast thou forsaken me?* But he was not left by him in Point of Grace, still a Spirit of Faith and Holiness acted him, and therefore though forsaken he cries out, *My God, my God.* If possible, in Conformity to our Head, we should not be left in that Hour in Point of Comfort, yet if we carry our selves as we ought, we should not be left in Point of Grace; and if we be not left in Point of Grace, all will do well, though not so sweet and joyous with us as otherwise it would be. And thus I have given you these more particular Directions, in order to a Preparation for a Dying Hour; which if you live up to, you may not only live above the Fear of Death, but also in the Joyful Expectation thereof Daily.

C H A P. XI.

Being a Consolatory Conclusion of the whole Discourse; containing Encouragements against the Fear of Death, unto all such as are found in the Practice of the foregoing Directions.

NOW for a Conclusion of the whole Matter. Upon all that hath been declared, Soul, let me ask thee one Question Dost thou indeed see thy particular Con-

Concern in this Business? So see it as really to make it thy great Work and Sollicitude while living to set all Things right, and make all ready for a Dying Hour? Some there are that are so happy as to do so; and art thou one of them? Then why shouldst thou fear Death? Yea, why shouldst thou not exult, and thy Heart leap within thee in the Sight and Thought of its Approach? True, it is a dark Entry, but it leads to a fair and stately Palace, even the Father's House: 'Tis a rough and difficult Passage, but it sets thee on shore in a large and fat Land: True, it carries with it somewhat a black, lowering, and ghastly Aspect to Nature; and Nature may at first possibly be startled, and recoil at the Sight of it; but open the Eye of thy Faith, and behold it in the Glass of the Gospel; view it in the Death of thy Lord and Head, and it will not appear half so terrible; yea, thou wilt find it to be not so much an Enemy as a Friend; not as a King of Terrors, but rather as a King of Comforts; not as an Object to be dreaded and trembled at, but rather to be rejoiced in, and triumphed over by thee; it will appear to be not Loss, but Gain; *For me to die is Gain*, says Paul, Phil. i. 21. yea, it will be thy great Gain, 'twill be the Period of all thy Misery, and the perfecting of all thy Happiness; and the Truth is, we are never perfectly Happy till Death comes. But for thy further Encouragement, I shall in a few Particulars shew you what Death, come when it will, doth, and will do, for such as make all ready for its coming.

I. Death,

1. Death, whenever it comes, will translate thee, thou ready Soul, from Earth to Heaven, from a strange Land to thine own Home, and Father's House: And will not this be a Kindness? As for this World, what is it to the poor Saints but a strange Land? 'Tis Heaven is their Home and Country: Hence they have confessed, and do *confess, themselves to be Pilgrims and Strangers upon Earth*, Heb. 11. 13. and the *Psalmist*, in the Words immediately foregoing my Text, *Psal. 39. 12.* owns it to God, *I am a Sojourner, and a Stranger, here*: Yea, this World is not only a strange Land, but a waste howling Wilderness to such, wherein they live among Wild Beasts, Lions, Bears, Wolves, Tygers, and the like; Lulls within, and Devils without, ready daily to devour them; but when Death comes, that carries them off from this strange Land, this waste howling Wilderness, to their own Home and Country, which is Heaven; yea, to their Father's House, there to live with him, to enjoy his Presence, and to adore his Grace. *We know*, says the Apostle, *that when our Earthly House of this Tabernacle* (speaking of the Body) *shall be dissolved, we have a Building with God, an House not made with Hands, Eternal in the Heavens*, 2 Cor 5. 1. And you know how Christ speaks to his Disciples, *John 14. 2.* *In my Father's House are many Mansions*: If it were not so I would have told you; and thither does Death carry you when it comes. Oh Sweet! Oh my Beloved! to go Home, to go to our Father's

ther's House, and to possess our Mansion there, that Mansion which our Dear Lord and Head is gone before to prepare for us, how Sweet is this to think of! And how many Deaths may it sweeten? Suppose one of you were some Thousand Miles distant from your Home, Country and Comforts, and you were in a waste howling Wilderness, among Lions and Bears, ready to devour you, a wide Sea also being between Home and you; and suppose withal that a Ship should come and take you into her, and in a short Time set you down in your own Country, and among all your Friends and Comforts, would not this be a Kindness? Why this is your Case here, O ye preparing Souls, and this is the Kindness Death does for you when it comes; while here, you are ten Thousand Miles distant from your Home and Country, your Friends and Comforts, and in a waste howling Wilderness; but Death, that Swift Sailor, comes, and in a Moment sets you down in Heaven, your Home and Country: O how welcome should it then be to you!

2. Death, whenever it comes, will carry thee from Trouble to Rest, from a Tempestuous Sea to a quiet Haven; there to lye at an Anchor in the Bosom of thy Sweet Lord. This World ever was, and (for any Thing I know) ever will be a Place of Trouble to the People of God: Sure I am, Christ hath told us, *In the World you shall have Tribulation,* John 16. 33. And who of us does not find it made good? This World is a Tempestuous Sea,

Sea, wherein the Waves lift up themselves, and the Poor Saints are *afflicted and tossed with Tempests*, and oftentimes *not comforted*, *Isa. 54.*

11. We read in *Jonah, 1. 13.* that the *Sea wrought, and was tempestuous, and the Mariners were fain to row hard to get the Ship to Shore.* And truly thus 'tis often in the Case in Hand, the Sea of this World is tempestuous, it works, and the Poor Saints are fain to row hard to get safe to Shore; yea, as we read, *Acts 27. 14.* that an *Euroclydon, a Tempestuous East wind arose, and beat upon Paul, and others in the Ship with him,* which was ready to break all in Pieces! So truly the Saints in this World do meet with *Euroclydons*, Tempestuous Winds, not a few, which beat upon them, and are ready to split all, and sink all; and now when Death comes, those Storms are all made a Calm, and they (I mean the Saints) are brought into the desired Haven: Death sets them at rest; *There* (says *Job*, speaking of the Grave) *the Weary are at Rest*, *Job 3. 17.* Death sends the Body to Rest, it frees it from all sensible Sufferings: When Death comes, thy Weak Body, thy Sick Body, thy Pained Body, thy Consumptive Body, shall have its Dismission to Rest: And Death sends the Soul to Rest, that Rest in God, and with God: *Blessed are they which die in the Lord, henceforth they rest from their Labours*, *Rev. 14. 13.* and you have, I think both together in one Scripture, *Isa 57. 2.* where speaking of the Righteous, 'tis said, *They shall enter*

enter into Peace, *they shall rest in their Beds.* Hence we read that *there remaineth a Rest unto the People of God,* Heb. 4. 9. Indeed it remains, 'tis not here; but when Death comes, that sets them down in this remaining Rest. O what a Kindness must this be? Rest! O how sweet is Rest? How desirable is Rest? And Rest too after long and hard Labour and Trouble? How sweet is Rest to the Labouring Man that hath wrought hard all the Day? How sweet is Rest to the weary Traveller that hath gone a long and dirty Journey? How sweet is Rest to the solicitous Mariner, and how welcome is the Harbour to him, especially after having been long toss'd and beaten with Storms and Tempests? And how sweet will Rest be to the Poor, Troubled, Tempted, Labouring, Travelling Saint, whose whole Life has been little else but Trouble, Labour, and sore Travel; who e'er could scarce all his Days find a Resting-Place for the Sole of his Foot, the World, as to him, being covered with a Deluge?

3 Death, whenever it comes, will turn your Conflicts into Victory; this *Acadama*, or Field of Blood, (for such is the World) into a Mount of Triumph, and a Throne of Glory! What is this World but an *Acadama*, a Field of Blood to the poor Saints? Sure I am this Life is little else but a perpetual War and Conflict with Lusts, with Devils, with Afflictions, and with Temptations; hence 'tis called a *Fight*, a *Warfare*,

fare, and the like: And the Enemies which they in this Warfare are to grapple with, are formidable Enemies: *We wrestle not*, says the Apostle, *with Flesh and Blood. but with Principalities and Powers, and Spiritual Wickednesses.* Eph. 6. 12. 13 We wrestle not with Flesh and Blood, that is, with Men, or any Thing that is Frail and Weak: No, we have more Potent and Formidable Enemies to deal withal; we wrestle and conflict with Devils, who are Potent, Subtle, and Indefatigable Enemies, (as Calvin observes upon the Place) *which wound before they appear, and kill before they are sen; Enemies which deal not only by Force and Power, but who are Dreadful, Crafty and Subtle, yea, Enemies which have fiery Darts to cast at us,* as afterwards he speaks. And for my own Part, I think it were well for us, over what it is, if these were the worst Enemies we had to grapple and conflict with; but there are Legions of Lusts within, (which I look upon to be worse Enemies) which we do and must wrestle with; (intestine Enemies are in many respects the worst) these *War against our Souls*, 1 Pet. 2. 11. and were it not for these, all the Devils in Hell could do us no hurt. Thus this Life is to the Saints a Warfare, a Conflict; and Oh the Wounds, the Bruises, the Bloodshed which they are exposed to in this War! Now their Peace, and then their Grace; now their Comforts, and then their Consciences, are sorely wounded, and they lye a Bleeding for Days and Weeks,

Weeks and Months together; yea, sometimes like him that was travelling from *Jerusalem* to *Jericho*, they were wounded, and left half dead, and did not the good *Samaritan* pass by, taking Compassion on them, and pour in of his Wine and Oil, his Blood and Spirit into their Wounds, they would soon be wholly Dead: Well, but now when Death comes that puts an end to this War, and sets them all down upon a Throne of Triumph: *To him that overcome*h, (says Christ) *will I grant to sit with me upon my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am sat down with my Father on his Throne, Rev. 3. 21.* When Death comes, then you begin an Eternal Triumph with Christ; then the Palm will be put into your Hands, and you shall Triumphantly cry, Victory, Victory, for ever. O how sweet will this be! How sweet is the Victory to a Soldier that has been long and hard put to it in the Battel? And indeed, the harder the Battel, the more Glorious the Triumph. 'Tis a sweet and great Saying which I have read in *Augustine* to this Purpose; *The Conqueror, saith he, Triumphs, and unless he had Fought he had never Conquered: And by how much the greater his Danger and Difficulty was in the Battel, by so much the greater is his Joy in the Triumph.* O Sirs, not only will Death set you upon a Mount of Triumph, but know for your Encouragement, the sharper your Conflicts and Warfare have been here, the more glorious will your Triumph be, when Death shall set you upon the Throne.

4. Death, whenever it comes, will charge your Bondage into Liberty, your Spiritual Thralldom into Glorious Freedom; and is not this a Kindness? Poor Soul, one thing here which thou bledest and groanest under is that Spiritual Bondage and Thralldom which thou liest under: And indeed this World is no other than a Prison, a Dungeon, an House of Bondage, to thee, the Land of thy Captivity: Here thou liest in Chains and Fetters, the Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt; yea, and the Iron sometimes enters into thy Spirit. Hence we read of *the Bondage of Corruption*, which indeed is the first Bondage in the World, a worse Bondage Ten Thousand times than that which *Israel* Groaned and Sighed under in *Egypt*, *who ye were made to serve with Labour, and whose Lives we made bitter with hard Bondage*, *Exod. 1. 13 14.* Truly, this Lust, and the other Lust, this Corruption, and the other Corruption, are as so many *Egyptians*, cruel Task-Masters, which make thee serve with Rigour, and thy Life bitter to thee with hard Bondage; and, O how dost thou Groan and Sigh under the Bondage of a Proud, Dead, Hard, Carnal, Unbelieving Heart, an Heart bent to Backsliding from God! And indeed, who that is sensible of it can but groan under it? This drew that heavy Groan from *Paul*, and bitter Outcry, *Rom. 7. 24. O wretched Man that I am!* Says he. Why, *Paul*, what's the Matter? Oh, says he, *I find a Law in my Members*, war-
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ring against the Law in my Mind, and bringing me into Captivity to the Law of Sin and Death. I am by Sin brought into Captivity to Sin, and I have a Body of Sin and Death lying heavy upon me, heavier than a Mountain of Brass or Iron; and who can but groan? And as 'twas with him, so 'tis with all the Saints in their Measure. Well, but when Death comes, Sirs, that will turn all this your Bondage into Liberty, yea, into the *Glorious Liberty of the Children of God*, Rom. 8. 21. that will turn again this your Captivity: And O how Sweet will that be! You have some little Tastes of this Liberty here: For where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is Liberty, 2 Cor. 3. 17. and the Tastes of it are Sweet, very Sweet; but O how Sweet will the full Enjoyment on't be! Paul breaks out into Praises in the Faith of it beforehand, *I thank God thr' ug^h Jesus Christ*, Rom. 7. 25. O Soul, how should this make thee long for Death? Can a Prison, can a House of Bondage, can a State of Thralldom, be pleasant to thee? Canst thou be well pleased to lie in Chains and Fetters of Sin and Guilt? Shouldst thou not rather Welcome that which alone would work thy Deliverance?

5. Death, whenever it comes, will be the Death of all your Sins, and the Perfection of all your Graces; and will not that be a Kindness? Poor Saint, how dost thou here Bleed and Groan under the Sense of the Life and Vigour of thy Sins on the one Hand, and of the

the Weakness and Imperfections of thy Graces on the other Hand; yea, how great are the Conflicts, and Holy Contentions of thy Spirit, to kill and bring down the one, and to quicken and perfect the other? How dost thou, with the Holy Apostle of Old, *forgetting those things which are behind, follow after, that thou mayest apprehend that for which also thou art apprehended of Christ Jesus, pressing towards the Mark, &c. Phil 3. 12, 13, 14.* Oh the Watchings, the Warnings, the Wrestlings, of the Soul for more Grace, more Holiness, more Victory over, and cleansing from Sin! Oh the many Prayers and Tears, Sighs and Groans, that thou pourest out between God and thy Soul in order hereunto! These Things are the Business of the Life; yea, and after all, Sin is still strong and lively, and Grace is still weak and imperfect, the Sense of which breaks thy Heart almost, and makes thee go Mourning all the Day long: What, Daily cleansing thy self, and yet still unclean! Daily perfecting Holiness, yet still imperfect! Oh how sad is this! Well, but Soul, when Death comes, things will be strangely alter'd with thee? That will do that for thee in one Moment, which thou by a whole Life of Prayers, Tears, Faith, Watching, Warring, Labouring, couldst not do; 'twill make thee perfect: Hence those above are said to be so; *The Spirits of Just Men made perfect, Heb. 12. 23.* Then, *all that is imperfect will be done away, and that which is perfect shall come,*

1 Cor. 12. 10. perfect Grace, perfect Holiness. Now there is much lacking in thy Faith, thy Love, thy Obedience, thy Humility, thy Heavenliness, thy Joy and Delight in God; but Death when it comes will make up all in a Moment: Yea, now thou art stained and defiled with Sin, and this Lust, and the other Lust, stirs, and works, and wars with thee; but when Death comes that will purge away all: Death is the Saints only perfect cleanser through Christ. Indeed 'tis said of Wicked Men and Hypocrites, that *their Iniquity shall be down with them in the Dust*, Job 20. 11. which is a dreadful Word indeed; Death does not kill their Sins; no, they live in the Grave; they go with them into the other World, and will there live in them for ever, which will be a great Part of their Torment: 'I will be indeed (however they may not think of it) the one half of Hell; for what is Hell but Sin at the highest, and Wrath at the hottest? But though it be thus with Wicked Ones, yet 'tis otherwise with the Saints: Death through the Grace of Christ, will for ever put a period to your Sin, and perfect your Graces. Oh Sweet! Who would not welcome Death!

6. Death, whenever it comes, will set thee above all afflictive Distances between God, Christ, the Comforter, and thee, and will set down thy Soul in the full, constant and immediate Vision and Fruition of all
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for ever; and is not this Sweet? Poor Saints here thou complainest that *God is a Stranger to thee, and as a Wayfaring Man, that turneth aside to tarry but for a Night.* Thou hast only now and then a short Visit from him, *Jer. 14. 8.* Thou complainest that *thy Beloved withdraws himself, and is gone,* *Cant. 5. 6.* Thou complainest that *the Comforter that should relieve thy Soul is far from thee,* *Lam. 1. 18.* Thou complainest of many sad and woful Distances from God, and of the Lowliness of thy Communion, and well thou mayest! For indeed how little a Portion is there here seen or enjoyed of him by thee? Well, but when Death comes, that will lift thee above all those Distances between God and thee, Christ and thee, and set thee down in the full, constant, and immediate Vision and Fruition of him for ever; the Thoughts of which made *Paul*, and others, to desire to be gone, and to chuse Death rather than Life, *2 Cor. 7. 6, 7, 8.* *We are confident,* (says he) *knowing that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord, for we walk by Faith, not by Sight; we are confident, I say, and willing rather to be absent from the Body, and to be present with the Lord.* Pray observe, *Paul* enjoyed as much of God and Christ here as most did; and yet all that Communion he enjoyed here he accounted as no Communion to that which he should enjoy after Death; while we are present in the Body, says he, that is, while we live in this

we are absent from the Lord, absent from God and Christ, our Communion here is but Distance and Estrangement, so low and unconstant is it in comparison of what we know we shall enjoy after Death: And therefore, says he, we had rather be absent from the Body, we had rather be gone hence, and be present with the Lord. Death will bring us to another guests Presence and Enjoyment of God and Christ, than here we shall ever be able to reach unto. Alas! All we enjoy of God and Christ here is but as an Earnest: So the Apostle speaks in the Verse foregoing: He that hath wrought us for this self-same thing is God, who also hath given us the Earnest of the Spirit: But when Death comes we shall enjoy the full Inheritance: All we enjoy here is but as the First-Fruits; we that have the First Fruits of the Spirit, says the Apostle, Rom. 8. 23. But when Death comes we shall have the full Vintage, full Incomes of Love, full Manifestations of Light and Life and Glory, Fulness of Joy and Pleasure in the Divine Presence, Psalm 16. 11. Full Embraces in Christ's Bosom, full Views of his Face, full Visions of his Glory. Death, when it comes, will bring us to the Beatifical Vision, which is all Good and Happiness in one: Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall see God, Mat. 5. 8. They do see God now, they see him by Faith, and those Sight of him are Sweet, Glorious, Soul-ravishing and Transforming Sight:

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But after Death they shall have other Sights of him, such Sights of him as will even infinitely surpass all that ever they had, or were capable of here. Here *they see him but through a Glass darkly*; that is, they have but low, oblique, mediate Sights of him; they see and enjoy but little of him; but when Death comes, then *they shall see him Face to Face*; that is, fully, clearly, immediately, 1 Cor. 12. 12. The Sum is, as a Learned Man gives it us, that *in this Life we have but slow and slender Sights and Enjoyments of God, in comparison of what we shall see, know and enjoy, of him in Eternal Life, Glos. Rhet.* Here they see but his Back-parts, as God said to Moses; but when Death comes they shall see his Face; that is, his Glory: Here they see him but negatively, as it were what he is not; but then they shall see him as he is, 1 John 3. 2. *We shall see him as he is*, in all his Glorious Excellencies and Perfections. In short, they shall then have such Sights and Enjoyments of God and Christ, as shall eternally fill, delight, solace, satisfy, and set at rest, their Souls for ever: such Sights and Enjoyments as shall so solace and satisfy them, as that there shall be no room for the least Tittle or Iota of a Desire for ever: yea, such Sights and Enjoyments as shall satisfy them, as to leave them under an utter Impossibility for ever turning aside from them to any Thing else, and so an eternal Impossibility of Sinning. O how sweet

must this be! And indeed the Schoolmen, I find, and others from them, give this as one Reason why the Saints in Heaven are impeccable, because the Sight and Enjoyment they have of God there is so full and satisfying, as they cannot turn aside to any Thing else. O welcome Death that brings us to those Sights, those Enjoyments of God, the Chief Good! Once more,

7. Death, whenever it comes, will bring you to, and set you down in the Enjoyment of an Eternal Sabbath: And Oh how sweet is this! *There remaineth a Rest* (the Word is, *a Sabbath or Sabbatism*) *to the People of God*, Heb. 4. 9. Ay, but when shall they enjoy it? Why truly when Death comes, that will enter them upon it immediately; upon the Night of Death dawns the Eternal Sabbath. True, the Saints enjoy a Sabbath here, and the Sabbath to them is the sweetest and amiablest Day in all the Week; 'tis a Day of Joy and Holy Feasting to their Souls; and O! How many times do your Souls long for it? But alas, these Sabbaths have an End; but the Sabbath, Death will set them down in, will be an Eternal Sabbath, an Eternal Sabbath, wherein they shall be employed in the highest Acts of Worship and Adoration, even Love, Praise, Admiration and Hallelujahs, for ever; wherein there will be no Weariness, no Faintness, wherein there shall be no Intermission; no going to Duties, and breaking off again, as here we do; but a whole

Eternity, shall be employed in Acts of Divine Worship and Adoration ; wherein there shall be no Deadness, no Dulness, no Spiritual Indispositions, no Unsuitableness in us to those high and holy Exercises which this Sabbath will be fill'd with, but our Souls shall be perfectly suited to, and fitted for those Glorious Employ's ; wherein not a few only, and those some Saints and some Sinners, some Good, and some Bad, shall join together in Acts of Worship, but an innumerable Company both of Saints and Angels, and all these perfect Holy, *Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24.* O how sweet and glorious will this be ! 'Tis a great Saying which I have read in a Worthy Divine, *Sabbaths here are Comfortable*, says he, *and we have tasted some Sweet, some Comfort, in some Sabbaths ; but taste all the Comforts that ever you had in all the Sabbaths you have enjoyed here, and all will be nothing to the Comforts and Sweetness of the Eternal Sabbath.* Alas ! The perpetual Sabbath that shall be hereafter, that will be the Accomplishment of all these Sabbaths, how Sweet then must that be ! O ye Saints of God lift up your Heads, Death will set you down in this Sabbath. How have some of us longed sometimes for the coming of the Sabbath ! And how have we grieved when it has been gone ? Well, but when Death comes that will bring you to a Sabbath that shall never end. 'Tis a sweet Saying of *Austin*. *There* (says he, speaking of Heaven) *is the great Sabbath, that hath no Evening*

ing, no End, on which we shall rest and behold, behold, and love, love and praise for ever. Oh blessed be God for this Sabbath! And blessed be God that Death when it comes, shall bring us to this Sabbath. Well then, fear not Death, dread not Death, but be found Diligent and Faithful in the Use of the Helps prescribed for the preparing of your Souls for it, and then it will greatly befriend you whenever it comes, and you may exalt and rejoyce in it.

I shall now conclude ; but I must beg all that read this plain Discourse deeply and frequently to consider and contemplate these Things.

1. Every Day seriously consider and contemplate the exceeding Worth of your Souls, and the great things they are capable of. 'Tis sad to think what low Thoughts the Most of Men have of their Souls; they are content to sell their Souls, to lose their Souls, to damn their Souls, and all for a Lust, for a little of this World, a little Carnal, Sensual Pleasure and Delight here, which is but for a Moment. That Rebuke which *Austin* gave one, is due to the most: *How comes it to pass*, says he, *that among all the good Things thou wilt let nothing be in an ill case but thy Self, thy Soul!* Truly the most of Men are solicitous to have all well but their Souls; they will have it go well with their Bodies, their Names, their Estates, their Families,

mities, but their Souls they mind not. But, my Beloved, I beseech you think deeply and frequently of the Worth of your Souls, and the Concerns of them; O! 'Tis your Souls that is your Principal Part. Christ, who best knew the Worth of Souls, tells you, that the whole World is nothing to one Soul; and that the Gain of the one cannot recompence the Loss of the other, no not in the least, *Mat. 16. 26.* And you know what a Price he was pleased to pay for Souls, even his own Blood, his precious Blood, Life and all, *1 Pet. 1. 19.* Besides, there are Two Things which speak the Soul to be a Thing of unspeakable Worth and Value, its vast Capacity, and its absolute Immortality. (1.) The Capacity of the Soul speaks its Worth: O what great Things is the Soul of Man capable of! There is a kind of Infiniteness, as a Worthy Divine observes, in the Soul of Man; 'tis capable of even an Infinite Happiness, or an Infinite Misery; 'tis capable of Eternal Life, or Eternal Death; 'tis capable of unconceivable Communications both of Love and Wrath, and must one Day be fill'd with the one or the other of them; 'tis capable of knowing God, or bearing his Image; of enjoying Glorious Communion with him, yea, of living God's own Life, and in a Participation of his own Blessedness. Look, whatever the Angels enjoy, look, whatever the Humane Soul of Christ enjoys, that the Soul is capable of the Enjoyment of, Sinner, O how precious

cious does this speak it to be! And how great should thy Concern be for it while Day and Season lasts? Contemplate it therefore a little, and say, O how precious is my Soul? And what great Things is it capable of? And it being so, why do I take up in such low, poor, duncy, drossy Things; as the best of Sin and this World are? Secondly, The Immortality of the Soul argues its Worth. The Soul never dies: It is indeed but as it were a Spark, a Beam of God's own Immortality breathed into the Body; at least there is a Stamp and Impress thereof upon it: The Body, that dies, that returns to Dust; but the Soul that lives, that goes to God, *Eccles. 12. 7.* As the Mortality of the Body, as the Learned Man observes, so the Immortality of the Soul is here asserted. Besides, *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, with the rest of the good Old Patriarchs, and the Servants of God, who died long since, are notwithstanding living still; so Christ argues you know, *Matt. 23. 32.* that is, their Souls live; as indeed do the Souls of all that are gone hence; their Souls will live either in Happiness or Misery, with God or Devils; and so must thine and mine, Sinner. When our Bodies shall be eaten by the Worms, our Souls will live either in Heaven or Hell. O think of this: Daily contemplate and say, I have a Soul within me that must live for ever, and that as filled with even an Infinite Happiness or Misery; I have a

Soul within me that is capable of unspeakable Joys, or unconceivable Torments, and in the one or the other it will, it must, live for ever: Why then am I not more concerned for it?

2. Seriously contemplate, and daily keep your Spirits on the Thoughts of the Wonderful Weight and Importance of Eternity, the greatest of the Concern of the other World. O Eternity, Eternity! O Vast, Great, Boundless, Eternity, How shall I do to speak of thee? How are my Thoughts lost, and my Spirits overwhelmed, when I set my self to contemplate how great, how weighty a Thing thou art? An Endless, Boundless, Bottomless State; a State that admits of neither Change, Pause, nor Period for ever. A State of unconceivable Happiness or Misery: Happiness in the Enjoyment, or Misery in the Loss of, and Banishment from God and Christ for ever. Happiness in the Fruition of Infinite Love, or Misery in the Revelation of Infinite Wrath, one of which every Soul must be the Object of for ever. Eternity! Such is the Weight of it in itself that indeed we know not how to conceive of it: Every thing but Eternity has an end at last: So innumerable as the Stars of Heaven are, yet there is a last Star, and the Number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it: So innumerable as the Sands on the Sea-shore are, yet there is a last Sand and the Number of them has an end, could we reach it: So numerous, as the Piles
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of Grass, which are now, and from the Creation of the World have been, and to the End of the World shall be, are, yet there is an end of the Number of them, could we reach it; there is a last Pile, a last Spire of Grass: So innumerable as the Grains of Corn in all the Harvests that ever were, or shall be, are, yet the Number of them has an end, though we cannot reach it, and there is a last Grain: So innumerable as all the Drops of Rain that ever did fall, or shall fall, upon the Earth, from the Creation, to the End of the World, are, yet still there is a last Drop; yea, and that though all the Drops contained in the wide and deep Sea be added thereunto: So innumerable as the Children of Men have been, are, and shall be, to the end of all things: So innumerable as all the Hairs of the Head of them all have been, are, and will be: So innumerable as all the Thoughts of the Hearts of all throughout all Ages have been, are, and will be: So innumerable as all the Brutes and Animals which both the Earth and the Sea have brought forth, do, and will bring forth, are, and will be, yet still the Number of them has an End, could we reach it; and there is a last Man, a last Hair, a last Thought, a last Animal: Should all the vast Body of the Heavens, which our Eyes behold, be full written with Figures by the Hand of an Angel, yet the Number of those Figures would have an end, and there would be a last Figure: But as for

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Eternity, that has no End, no Last: Could all those vast Numbers prementioned be put together into one, who could in the least conceive of the Thousand Thousandth Part of it? Yet all this were nothing to Eternity, no, not a Thousand Thousandth Part of it. Thus Eternity is unconceivably weighty in it self, and 'tis Eternity indeed that puts Weight into all other Things: 'Tis Eternity that puts Weight into the Future Judgment. What were that Judgment, but that 'tis Eternal Judgment? *Heb. 6. 2.* 'Tis Eternity that puts Weight indeed into the Happiness and Joys of Heaven: What were that Happiness and those Joys, were they not Eternal? Hence 'tis called *Eternal Life, Eternal Glory, a Neverfading Crown, an Everlasting Kingdom, Joy and Pleasure for evermore.* So (you know) the Scripture speaks of it as that that is its Crown and Perfection; hence we read of *being for ever with the Lord, 1 Thess. 4. 17.* To be with the Lord is Sweet: *Peter* found it so; all the Saints in their Measure find it so here. But to be with the Lord (for ever) that makes it infinitely Sweet indeed: Thus and thus (for ever) in the Bosom of my Father's Love, and there (for ever) in the Views of my Redeemer's Glory, and there (for ever) joyned with an innumerable Company of Angels, in Loving, Praising, Admiring, Adoring and Singing Hallelujahs to God and the Lamb; and this (for ever) to be fully swallowed up in the Divine Life, the Divine Will, the Divine Presence, the Divine

Divine Fulness, and this (for ever) to be set above all Sin, to be delivered from an unavoidable Necessity of Sinning, to an absolute Impossibility of Sinning, and this (for ever.) O how sweet, how glorious is this! This one Word, *Eternity*, or *for Ever*, is that which puts great Sweetness into it. Again, 'tis *Eternity* that indeed puts Weight into the Miseries and Torments of the Damned: What were the Fire of Hell, were it not unquenchable Fire? What were the Worm there, were it not a never-dying Worm? When the Scripture would speak of the exceeding Greatness and Severity of those Torments (you know) 'tis in this Language, *There the Worm never dies, and the Fire is never quenched*, Mark 9. 44. There Miseries and Torments are Eternal; and indeed Hell would be no Hell, in Comparison, had it not Eternity in it. Most weighty is the Meditation which I have read in a Learned and Holy Man to this Purpose; O *Eternity!* *Eternity!* O never-ending *Eternity!* O *Eternity*, that can be measured by no Space of Time, that can be perceived or apprehended by no Human Intellect or Understanding! How unconceivably dost thou augment the Torments of the Damned! And but a few Lines after he again cries out, O *Eternity!* *Eternity!* Thou, and thou alone, dost aggravate the Torments, the Punishments of the Damned beyond all Measure. Heavy is the Punishment of the Damned, because of its Sharpness, its Extensiveness, its Universality, there being all Plagues and Punishments in

it, but, says he, 'tis most heavy because of its Eternity. Oh! 'Tis this indeed that makes it intolerably great and heavy. Oh! Not only to be banished from God and Christ, to be driven from the Beatifical Vision, but to be banished and driven from hence for ever. Oh doleful! To be in the Flames, to suffer the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, to be Sinning, and always bearing the Punishment of Sin, and all this for ever! O this makes it out of Measure heavy, thus, and always thus, under the Wrath of God, and for ever so! This puts Weight into it. Thus you see a little of the Weight of Eternity. O contemplate it daily!

3. Consider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miscarry for ever; and on the other Hand, what a wide Door of Mercy there is open to you, and the fair Opportunity you have of making a Blessed Provision for your Souls and Eternity.

1. Consider and contemplate how doleful a thing it will be to miscarry for ever, to perish eternally. The more Worth there is in the Soul, and the greater Weight there is in Eternity, the more Doleful it will be to Perish or Miscarry: As to the Interest of them, to miscarry in our Estate, in our Trade, in our Name, in the Change of our Condition in this World, or the like, this is sad, and sinks many; but Oh, what is this to the Miscarriage of the Soul for ever! What is this to miserable Eternity, to the Loss of God, of Christ, of the Comforter,
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of Heaven, and Eternal Life? What is this to the Wrath of God, to the Vengeance of Eternal Fire, to utter Darkness, to Blackness of Darkness for ever? O Sirs! To have Infiniteness and Eternity combine against you to make you miserable, and to be for ever as miserable as Infiniteness and Eternity can make you (as assuredly you will in case you neglect to make Provision for your Souls, and the future Life) O how dreadful, how doleful will this be! And what bitter Lamentations will it fill you with for ever! Did *Esau* weep when he had lost his Birthright? And did *Lysmachus* upbraid himself, and bewail his Folly, for parting with his Kingdom for a Draught of Water? O then how will you weep and wail, and even tear and Torment your selves for ever, for your Sin and Folly, when you shall find that for a little of this World, for the Satisfaction of a Lust, for a few dreggy, droffie Pleasures, and sensual Delights, or perhaps through a meer Sloth of Spirit, you have lost your Souls; and have plunged your selves into an infinite Ocean of Eternal Woe and Misery, whence there is no Redemption for ever for you! Pray lay that Scripture to Heart now, *Luke 13. 27, 28.* Depart from me, says Christ, all ye Workers of Iniquity. Depart; here is the Doom that will pass at last upon every Unrepenting, Unbelieving, Sinner, every Soul that makes not ready for a Dying Hour: Well, and what then? *There shall*

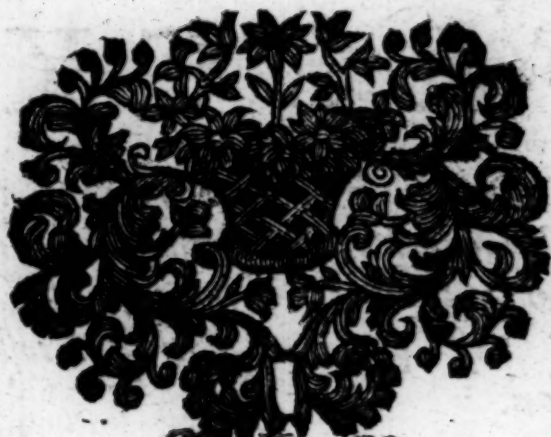
shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when you shall see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you thrust out, O Sirs! When you shall see such and such lodged safe in Heaven, in the Bosom of Christ, and your selves shut out; and not only so, but cast into utter Darknes, as you have it added, Mar. 18. 12. When you shall see your selves shut up in the Infernal Pit, and there sealed up under God's Eternal Wrath, O then you will weep and gnash your Teeth indeed! Then your own Conscience will be Eternally a second Hell to you, tearing and tormenting your Souls in the Remembrance of your Sin and Folly, in neglecting to prepare for, and make sure of a better State. Think of these Things ere it be too late.

2. Consider and Contemplate what a wide Door of Mercy there is open to you, and what a fair Opportunity God gives you to make a Blessed Provision for your Souls and Eternity. What shall I say? Why, Sirs, the Way of Salvation is made plain to you, and you are daily called to the Marriage-Supper of the Lamb; the great King of Heaven invites you to come and partake of this Gospel-Feast; by one and another Servant of his, which he sends to you, he lets you know that all Things are ready; all that your Souls can need to make them happy for ever; Christ is ready, and in him Life is

is-ready, Grace is ready, Peace is ready, Pardon is ready, a Compleat Righteousness, or your Justification, and Acceptation with God is ready, Heaven is ready, Salvation is ready, and withal, he bids you come; yea, he earnestly importunes and solicites you to come and least your Souls upon these Things; he freely and frequently offers himself and all to you, entreating your Acceptance: Yea more, he opens the Arms of his Love to you, assuring you of most Cordial Welcome, and ready Reception, notwithstanding all your Sins and Mis-carriages. *Him that cometh unto me I will by no Means cast out*, John 6. 37. Let him be who and what he will, a young or an old Sinner, a small or a great Sinner, a Sinner that hath stood it out against me a little or a long Time, I will not cast him out, my Grace is free, my Fulness is large and sufficient, my Blood is precious, and this has an infinite Vertue in it: My Spirit is Powerful and Efficacious! I am every Way mighty to save, able to *save to the utmost all that come unto God by me*: Yea, 'tis my Work and Business to save; my Father sealed and sent me for that End, and for that End came I into the World, and there did and suffered such Things as I did; and I may not, I will not, cast off any Poor Soul that will come and partake of me and my Fulness, and that would fain be helped on towards Life and

and Blessedness. This is really the Language of Christ to poor Sinners; yea more, he sends his Spirit to Enlighten, to Convince, to Perswade, to Draw and Allure them; and he does Move in them, and Strive with them: O what a wide Door of Mercy is there here open to you, Sirs! And how fair is your Opportunity of preparing for, and making use of a Blessed Eternity? Oh! Accordingly as you love your Souls, and would live for ever, come in to Christ, come and apply, and improve him in a way of believing, for the Good of your Eternal Souls; in his Strength set upon repenting: Believing work the Work of your Souls and Eternity; and your Day being so bright, as indeed it is, O labour to know the Things of your Peace in your Day, lest neglecting them Christ speedily say of you, as once with Tears in his Eyes he did of neglecting *Jerusalem*, Luke 19. 42. *O that thou hadst known in thy Day the Things which belong to thy Peace! But now they are hid from thine Eyes* ——— I have done. I'll close all with that Holy Wish for you, my Dear Congregation, and my self, that *Austin* was wont to make for himself and his People, namely, *That as they had been often crouded together to Worship God in that Earthly Temple, wherein he preach'd so they might Eternally live together in the Heavenly Temple above.* So my Wish and Desire is, That we, my Beloved, you, and I, who have often been throug'd and crouded together in an Earthly

ly House, may live together Eternally, and Eternally adore God together in our Father's House above: And if we shall never Preach and Pray, Hear and Sing together more on Earth, (as I am apt to think we shall not) yet that we may Praise, Love, and Admire God, and Sing Hallelujahs to him for ever together in Heaven. *Amen, Amen.*



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Mr.

Mr. Pearse's
Last LETTER
TO HIS
FLOCK.

To my Dearly Beloved Friends, that small Company, to whom, by the Providence of God, I have some Tears last past preached the Everlasting Gospel.

Dearly and Longed for in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, Grace, Mercy and Peace unto you, from God our Father, thro' our Lord Jesus Christ, by the Eternal Spirit.

I*t is now many Tears since, by the Providence of God, we have been called to Worship his Great and Reverend Name together; during which Time God hath been exceeding good to us, manifesting his Power in our Weakness, and his Love in our Unworthiness: He hath declared his Name to be Re-*
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corded amongst us, by his Coming to us, and Blessing of us: Some of you have been Convinced, some Converted, some Edified, and all (I hope) Quickened and Encouraged Heavenwards: And not only your selves, but through the Grace of God many others have been Born to Christ amongst us, and more Built up in the Holy Faith. O the many warm, sweet and refreshing Sabbaths we have enjoy'd together; and what shall we say to these Things? Or what shall we do? O, let us bow down at the Foot of God, and adore his Infinitely, Infinitely, Infinitely Free, Rich, and Powerful Grace, ascribing all the Glory to that alone, to which (I am sure) all is due. God hath now called me aside from you, and not only from you, but he seems to be calling me out of his Vineyard, yea, out of this World: I have long had a Weak and Infirm Body, but now God in his Wise and Holy Providence hath seen good to reduce me to a far lower and weaker State of Body, my Health being now utterly broken: Yet I must say God is exceeding Good to me, and deals in Fatherly Tenderneſs with me: I have neither much Sickneſs, nor much Pain, only my Disease, according to its Name, gradually consumes me; nor am I without some lucid Intervals: God both lifts me up, and casts me down, (as he dealt with the Church of Old:) Sometimes I am under some Revivings, which seem to give Hopes of a return from the Grave, anon nothing but Death seems to be in view: And in this dubious State I am waiting upon the Will of God, which (I am sure) is Holy, Wise and Good, and which (I hope) shall be welcome to me, whether it be for Life or Death: Hitherto, through Grace, Death hath not been

been terrible to me ; what it may be, in its nearest Approaches I cannot tell ; but I look to and rest upon him who hath destroyed both Death, and him that had the Power of Death.

And now only Two things I beg of you, one is, that you will give me a room in your Prayers while I am in the Land of the Living ; and I desire you would beg of God these Things for me.

First, That all Sin and Guilt cleaving to me may be fully expiated and discharged through the Blood of Christ. O beg both Forgiveness and Repentance for me, which (God knows) I greatly need.

Secondly, That my Will may be thoroughly resigned up unto the Will of God, either for Life or Death.

Thirdly, That I may have much of God's Presence with me, and may always have good Thoughts of him, and his Dispensations towards me, in all he doth or shall lay upon me.

Fourthly, That if God should please to restore me, I may come out of this Furnace purified and refined, as Gold that is tried Seven times, and more fitted for my Master's Service : Or if his Pleasure is (which seems at present most probable) to put a Period to my Mortal Life, that his Love, and the Light of his Countenance may shine upon me, to sweeten the bitter Pains of Death to me ; we cannot live comfortably without his Love, much less can we die comfortably without it. That is my First Request. The other is, That you will accept and embrace some plain, but weighty Counsels. God is my Record, that my Heart's Desire and Prayers for you is, and has been, that you may be saved, and

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in Love to your Salvation I leave these Directions with you.

1. Above all things look well to, and labour to make sure of an Union with Christ, knowing assuredly, that without Union with him all your Religion is vain and ineffectual.

2. Take heed of too much Addictedness to this World, as remembring, that if any Man love the World, the love of the Father is not in him. And that the Friendship of this World is Enmity to God.

3. Dwell much within, and be much conversant in Heart-work, in studying the Heart, searching the Heart, cleansing the Heart, keeping the Heart, looking always upon it as the veriest Cheat and Impostor in the World, deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked.

4. Take heed of splitting upon that fatal Rock of Self-deceit, of which you have sometimes heard, and upon which the greatest part of Professors split and perish for ever.

5. Set up, and keep up the Worship of God, both in your Families and Closets: For the Lord's sake let none of yours be Prayerless Families.

6. Always maintain a great Honor and Reverence for all God's Ordinances, and in an especial Manner Honour and Sanctifie his Sabbath: The Sabbath Day is your Soul's Market-Day; O lose not your Market!

7. Be universally Honest and Upright in your Callings, and your Dealings in them: The Fraudulent Dealings of Professors do much reproach the Gospel.

8. Covet to seat your selves under a sound, clear, searching, Gospel Ministry, and keep mainly to the same Ministry, and the Lord guide you therein.

9. Labour

9. Labour that your Profiting under the Ministry may appear unto all Men: It will be a dreadful Thing to enjoy Rich Means, and bring forth no Fruit to Perfection: O Sirs, be Fruitful Christians!

10. Expect farther Trials and Sufferings, and prepare for them: There is a dark and gloomy Day coming, such as (I am apt to think) you and I have never seen any like unto it, and such as wherein (possibly) you will think it best with them that God shall have hid in the Grave beforehand: But be not troubled, it will be short, and a Glorious Day will follow, a Day wherein the Church of God shall sing the Song of Moses, and of the Lamb, a Day wherein our Dear Lord and Head shall Reign Gloriously: And therefore,

11. Pray and Long, Long and Pray much and earnestly for the Coming of the Day of God, for the Coming of Christ's Kingdom: Thy Kingdom come is a Petition should be much upon our Hearts. O do not rest in low Things, as to Divine Appearances and Manifestations, both in the World, and in your own Souls. These Counsels I leave with you, out of that entire Love and Affection I bear to your Salvation, and our Lord's Honour, as concerned in you, I will conclude all with that solemn and cordial Profession to you, which Augustin often made to those to whom he was wont to Preach, viz. That it is the Desire of my Soul, that as we have been often crouded together to Worship God in one Earthly House or Temple, so we may all Worship him together for ever in the Heavenly House or Temple: And if we must never Pray and Preach, and Hear, and Mourn, together more on Earth, yet we may
Love,

Love, and Sing, and Praise, and Admire, and Rejoyce together for ever in Heaven: Which that we may do, the God of Peace, (who brought again from the Dead our Lord Jesus Christ, that Great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the Blood of the Everlasting Covenant) make us perfect in every Good Work to do his Will, working in you and me that which is well-pleasing in his Sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be Glory for ever, and ever. Amen and Amen.

My Dear Friends, I am your Weak and Languishing, but yet Cordial Friend, and Willing Servant, in Christ, and for Christ,

EDWARD PEARSE,

F I N I S

Some B O O K S proper to be given at
Funerals, viz.

Books of 1s. Price.

Pease on Death.
Flavel's Token for Mourners.
Baxter's Now or Never.
Great Affize, &c.
Contemplatio Mortis.

Books of 1s. 6d. and 2s. 6d.

Dr. Bates's Four Last Things.
Bishop Patrick's Hearts Ease.
—— His Divine Arithmetick.
Baxter of Death and Judgment.
Guide to Eternity.
Mirrour that flatters not.
Drexelius on Eternity, &c.

For the Richer sort, Books of Four, Five and Six
Shillings Price, &c.

Drelincourt's Defence against the Fear of Death,
Taylor's Holy Living and Dying, &c.

*We may say of a Book given at Funerals, what
the Divine Herbert says of a Verse.*

A Book may find him who a Sermon flies,
And turn a Gift into a Sacrifice.

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The Author hath also published Two other
Treatises, viz.

The best Match; or, the Soul's Espousal to Christ
A Beam of Divine Glory; or, A Treatise of God's
Unchangeableness.

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